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# S E R M O N S

ON

*Sam. J. Miller's.*

Various SUBJECTS,

By the RIGHT REVEREND

✓  
*PETER BROWNE*, D. D.

Late Bishop of *Corke and Rossfe.*

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Now first published from the AUTHOR's original  
Manuscripts.

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I N T W O V O L U M E S.

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V O L. I.

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MDCCLXIX.

# SEYMOUR

Various Subjects

In the History of the

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T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**H E following Sermons were left to me by the will of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Ruffell, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Corke, to whom the Right Reverend Author had bequeathed them, though I could never find that he had given any directions to have them published ; I know Mr. Ruffel did intend to publish them, but was discouraged, by the Booksellers assuring him that no books were less enquired for at their shops than Sermons.

I am ready to acknowledge, that there are extant a great many more good Sermons than are read, and yet I will hope I need not make any apology for printing the discourses of so celebrated a preacher, and so sound a divine, especially in a City where they were all spoke, and where numbers still remain who were his constant hearers.

I think it proper to assure the reader, that these Sermons are the genuine works of the Right Reverend Father in God Doctor Peter Browne late Lord Bishop of Corke and Ross, that the manuscripts, from whence



they are printed, are either in his own hand writing, or fair Copies, interlined in many places by himself, and in the beginning of every one of them, he has marked in his own hand the time and place when and where he preached them.

Whether all the following Sermons will stand that severe critical enquiry as to style, &c. that the finished pieces published by the author himself are proof to, I shall not pretend to judge: But had it been clear to me that they would not, I should not have thought myself defendable in preferring his reputation among the criticks, to the glory of God and the good of Mankind, to which all whom I consulted on the occasion were convinced the publication of these Sermons would contribute.

Clonaghkilly, in the  
Diocese of Corke,  
Dec. 1. 1748.

*William Ellis.*

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# S E R M O N I.

That the Blood of Christ cleanses us  
from Sin.

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H E B R. ix. 14.

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who  
through the eternal spirit offered himself  
without spot to God, purge your conscience  
from dead works to serve the living God?*

**T**H E Apostle, in the foregoing part of S E R M. I.  
this chapter, shewing how the great  
anniversary sacrifice of expiation was a type  
of Christ, proceeds to compare the blood of  
those beasts which were offered up in it with  
the blood of Christ; in several instances all  
contained in this verse. For,

Whereas in the feast of expiation the High-priest offered up the blood of bulls and goats, Christ offered up himself.

The High-priest was a sinner, and offered up those sacrifices for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people; but Christ offered up himself without spot, and in him was offered the blood of the *lamb of God without spot, and without blemish.*

Again, the High-priest offered up the blood of beasts only, but here was offered up the

SERM. blood of a man, the blood of Christ. Nor  
 I. was it a sacrifice merely human neither, but it  
 was offered up *διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου, through the eternal spirit*, not through the holy spirit, as some few copies have it by a very obvious mistake: By which is signified, that it was the blood of a divine person, the blood of a man united to the divinity.

And lastly, which was the design and inference he makes from all the rest, he compares them as to their power and efficacy. The blood of those sacrifices could cleanse men only from legal impurities, such as were contracted by touching a dead body; eating meat that was forbidden by the law; drinking out of an unclean vessel; and such like. But the blood of Christ purges the conscience, and washes away the guilt and pollutions of the soul. *For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

The word here used of the blood of Christ is καθαρίσω to purify (i.e.) by cleansing or washing, as appears from the sprinkling to which it is opposed in the foregoing verse; and in other places where the very expression of washing is used with respect to the blood of Christ.

And by *dead works*, is meant such sins as men have been guilty of in the former course  
 of



of their lives ; as appears by its opposition to that legal uncleanness, which men had actually contracted. So that the Sense is this, the blood of Christ hath washed away the guilt of those sins you committed in the former course of your lives, and so put you in a condition of grace, and serving the living God.

In discoursing on these words, before I speak more particularly of the virtue and power of the blood of Christ, in respect of men, it will be necessary to observe to you these two things.

1. That it was an opinion universally prevailing among all nations, that washing of the body was necessary to take away the guilt of sin.

2. That the whole custom of religious washing with water, or sprinkling with blood, referred to the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ.

I. As to the first, it is very plain that the cleansing of the body is a very apt and obvious emblem of the innocence of the mind, and indeed the only way we have of raising any image of it in this life. For we do not know how sin pollutes the soul, nor how virtue beautifies it; the horrid deformity of guilt, and the ravishing beauty of virtue and innocence; the alteration they make in the mind, for the better or the worse, will not be seen 'till the great change at the resurrection; when all the beauties and deformities of the mind shall be as discernable as those of the body are now :

SERM. Therefore I say it was very natural for men to  
 I. fall into this custom of washing, whenever they  
 had any occasion to manifest and declare their  
 innocence: As Pilate did when he washed  
 his hands, and declared himself innocent of  
 the blood of Christ.

But this could not be the reason of that  
 washing which was occasioned by a sense of  
 sin; this was not to manifest their innocence,  
 but to wash away their guilt: And this was  
 the reason why, both among Jews and Hea-  
 thens, most of their sacrifices were attended  
 with solemn washings. For they did not  
 think it sufficient that atonement was made to  
 God, in the punishment of their sin, by the  
 effusion of blood; for if that was all, there  
 had been no occasion for any further cere-  
 mony; but they imagined something more  
 was to be done, and that the soul was to be  
 actually cleansed from sin; and therefore the  
 custom of washing and sprinkling prevailed.  
 Not that every one that used it knew the rea-  
 son of the thing, and the immediate design  
 and tendency of it; but, as it is in the case of  
 sacrifices, when a custom prevails universally  
 in the world, without any apparent reason, it  
 is a great argument that there must be some  
 foundation for it in natural or revealed re-  
 ligion.

The Jews were enjoined great variety of  
 washings; their priests and their people were  
 cleansed and consecrated by washing; all  
 manner of legal uncleanness was purged and  
 purified

purified by it; and the reason of this washing SERM.  
 is expressed, that they might be holy and ac- I.  
 ceptable to God; and if they omitted these  
 washings after any breach of the law, or any  
 contracted uncleanness, 'tis said, Levit. xvii.  
*16. they shall bear their iniquity.*

And so likewise the blood of their sacrifices  
 was sprinkled on the people, as particularly  
 in that sacrifice instanced in the 19th verse of  
 this chapter, where 'tis said, that *Moses took  
 the blood of calves and of goats, and sprinkled  
 the people.* And it follows at the 22d. verse,  
 that the reason of it was, that thereby *he  
 might purge them, for that all things are by the  
 law purged with blood.* It is to this custom of  
 sprinkling the people with blood and water, that  
 David alludes in his 51st. psalm. *Wash me  
 from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my  
 Sin;* and again, *Thou shalt purge me with  
 Hyssop and I shall be clean;* because the manner  
 of sprinkling was with hyssop and wool dipped  
 in the blood of the sacrifice mingled with  
 water. Nay this same opinion prevailed a-  
 mong the heathens, that all contracted guilt  
 was to be purged away; and to this custom  
 among them Job alludes in the 9th chap.  
 30th verse, *If I wash my self with Snow water,  
 and make my hands ever so clean; yet shalt thou  
 plunge me in the ditch* (i. e.) not hold me inno-  
 cent. And this opinion was the occasion of  
 water baptism prevailing so much among  
 them, especially at their initiating of profe-  
 lytes; that they might be cleansed from the



SERM. guilt of their former life, before they were  
 I. admitted to a purer worship. But 2dly,

This whole custom of washing had respect to that mystical cleansing of sin by the blood of Christ. 'Tis plain from what hath been said, that mankind in general was inclined to think that some purification of the soul from actual guilt was necessary, besides that atonement they imagined to be made by their sacrifices; and therefore as these were types of the body of Christ offered up upon the cross, so the washings that attended them were types of his blood, and of that power of it in cleansing us from the guilt of sin.

Now, though it appeared that some cleansing was absolutely necessary, yet when they came to consider the matter, neither Jews nor Heathens could ever be inclined to believe, that washing the dirt off of the skin should really cleanse the soul. Nothing was better known, or more generally received, than that no outward application of remedy could make any real alteration in the soul. There was nothing in all nature or religion that could occasion such a thought, as that the innocence of the mind should be an effect or consequence of beautifying the skin; nay the contrary was evident from the plainest principles of reason. 'Tis true the cleanness of the skin was a very apt and lively emblem of innocence, nay the best that could be found; but then it evidently supposed that there was something to be wrought in the soul answerable to that outward

ward cleansing; otherwise the whole custom of washing had been absurd and ridiculous; it would have had neither any effect of its own, nor any similitude or application whatsoever; it would have been wholly an useless and insignificant ceremony.

SER. M.  
I.

And accordingly though the Jews obtained a bodily legal purity by those washings, so that after any breach of the law they might be admitted to the publick worship of God and conversation with men again; yet they had no opinion of any real immediate effect of those washings, Jeremiah, ii. 22 *Though thou wasthest thee with nitre (says the Prophet) and take thee much soap; yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.* And notwithstanding those washings it follows, *How canst thou say I am not polluted?*

So that we see the Apostle's argument in the text is not only *a pari*, i. e. as the blood of legal sacrifices cleansed the pollutions of the body, so the blood of Christ purges away the guilt of the mind; but *a minori*. For in truth there was no innate real virtue in the legal washings or sprinkling the blood of their sacrifices of themselves to take away any legal impurities. What virtue and efficacy they had was derived from that blood of which they were representatives; that blood which alone had a real proper innate efficacy to purge the conscience from sin. Washing and sprinkling of blood could not work by any natural efficiency; for if so, nothing would be easier

SERM. than for the greatest sinner to be perfectly innocent; none may need fear sinning, for upon the committal of any sin it is no great thing to *go wash and be clean*, as was said to Naaman the leper. But, since it cleansed by representation only, it must be washing religiously, i. e. with signification and a farther reference, for otherwise all washings would have the same effect, and the rivers of Damascus would have done as well for the curing of Naaman's leprosy, as the river Jordan.

I. Having thus prepared the way by these two particulars, and laid a foundation for explaining this great point of christian doctrine of the blood of Christ's purging the conscience from sin; it will be convenient to see what the sense of those men is, who deny the substance of this doctrine, though they seem to own it; and whose mistaken opinions about it have occasioned a farther explication of this article of our faith than would otherwise have been necessary.

One would think they allowed all that we contend for, or that the scriptures design. And indeed they do, if they would not say and unsay all again.

Crellius in his notes on the text says, *Sanguis Christi a peccatorum reatu emundandi vim habet, perpetuumque quoddam est expurgandæ conscientiæ remedium.* But the reason he gives for it is, because it confirms the pardon of our sins to us. So that here is a plain contradiction; the blood of Christ hath a power of cleansing



sing us from guilt ; and yet it doth not cleanse, SERM.  
but only assure us that we are all cleansed. I.

And yet in the same note he hath this expression, *Sanguis Jesu Christi non tantum peccatorum nostrorum reatum omnem abolet, sed ejus rei certissimam nobis fidem facit.* So that now he owns it both washes away the guilt of our sins ; and besides gives us assurance that they are washed away.

*Sanguis Jesu Christi (says Schlichtingius) purificat nos ab omni peccato, nullo excepto, et si maximum & gravissimum fuerit, i. e.* says he in the contemplation of the obedience of Christ God remits our sin. So that the blood of Christ purifies us from all sin without exception, and yet it doth not purify us from the least sin ; for God forgives us without any such cleansing.

And Crellius again in his notes on the text, speaking of the blood of Christ in opposition to that of the legal sacrifices, says, that *it hath in itself, in the very nature of the thing, a most extraordinary energy and power ad expurgandas conscientiae labe* ; to wash away the spots of the soul. And just after in an high strain of eloquence he attributes every other effect to it but this, that of confirming his doctrine ; making his way into heaven ; presenting himself without spot, pure and immaculate ; obtaining all power to forgive sins. And then he makes this consequence ; who then can doubt but that the blood of Christ actually purges the conscience from sin ? a  
strange



SERM. strange way of proving it by allowing every  
I. other effect but this, which he flatly denies.

I could tire you with instances of this sort out of their best writers, insomuch that perhaps there are not in the world greater instances of the power of prejudice to blind men, than the greatest champions of that cause, whose works upon this subject are a continued series of contradictions of this kind, visible to any ordinary understanding who rightly takes the pinch of this controversy.

Now if you urge upon them all those texts of scripture which speak of the blood of Christ's washing, or cleansing, or purging us from sin; they say they are all a figurative way of speaking, all metaphor and allusion only to the legal washings and sprinkling the blood of the Sacrifices; not, say they, that it can have any real effect, for how can blood cleanse the soul? But who ever said that it could? we both agree in this that it is a figurative way of speaking. But then here we differ; Socinus and his followers say they allude to the legal washings and sprinklings of the blood of the sacrifices; which we don't deny, because those washings and sprinklings were types of this blood. We say they have a further allusion, and that they both refer to the things of another world, and that they are designed to represent and signify to us such things as we are not able now to conceive; and which could not be more aptly represented to us under any other resemblances.

This

This was the fatal rock on which Socinus SERM. split. He saw these expressions were metaphor and analogy, as he speaks at every turn; I. and from thence he makes this false inference, that therefore they express no real proper efficacy of the blood of Christ. The reason of which was because he did not see the true application and allusion of that analogy. Alas! the power and virtue of the blood of Christ being revealed to us by way of analogy, doth not at all lessen the reality of it; any more than it derogates from the truth and reality of any other mystery of our religion; and that for the same reason, because this mysterious operation of the blood of Christ in cleansing our souls from sin, could not be revealed to us after any other manner.

And that we may clear up this matter to every capacity, it must be observed that the holy scriptures represent innocence to us under the notion of a clean skin, and a white garment. Rev. vii. 14. *These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* The reason of which is because we are not able to form any conception of that glorious alteration which virtue and holiness make in the soul. And again the guilt of sin in the mind, and the manner of its defiling of it, is represented by that of a scarlet colour; which way of speaking in all probability took its first rise from the blood of innocent persons, which was supposed to stain the guilty. Pursuant to this, 'tis said, Isaiah i.

SERM. 18. *Though your sins be as scarlet they shall*

I. *be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.* The reason of which is because we cannot imagine how it is that sin pollutes the soul; we know as little of this now as we do of the substance of the spirit of man; so that the surprizing beauty of holiness, and the deformity of vice are hidden from our eyes till the great day of the revelation of all things.

Agreeably to this form of speaking, the blood of Christ is said to wash away the stains of the conscience; to cleanse it from that dirt and filth it had contracted; and to bring that scarlet die of ours to a white colour. 1. *John i. 7.* 'Tis said, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.* And again *Eph. v. 26.* *Christ gave himself for the church, that he might cleanse it with the washing of water; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.* Not that blood or water can affect or touch the soul; but because the washing of water, and sprinkling of blood was the most apt and lively emblem to exhibit and reveal to us that divine mysterious operation of the blood of Christ, in taking away the guilt and pollutions of the conscience; the effect of which is as real in the mind, as that of washing away filth or spots is in the skin.

Thus much therefore of this mystery is plain and intelligible, and the proper object of our reason; and what we now conceive of this great truth is, that as water washes away the dirt



dirt of the body, and as exquisite cosme-  
ticks beautify the skin by a natural efficiency;  
so the blood of Christ, by a supernatural work,  
takes the stains of guilt out of the soul, and  
renders us pure and innocent as if we had ne-  
ver sinned. But as to the true nature of this  
work, the real manner of its operation, where-  
in the secret virtue and divine efficacy of the  
blood of Christ consists; and what the true  
nature of those diseases is which are to be  
cured, and what this mysterious application is  
in itself; all this I say neither is nor could be  
revealed to us. We cannot form the least  
conception of it, we have no capacities for it;  
and therefore think and speak of it under  
the similitudes of purging and cleansing  
and washing. Here therefore we bow and  
submit our reason, and adore that mystery  
we cannot comprehend. This transform-  
ing of our souls into the likeness of Christ  
by virtue of his blood, is the work of that  
divinity that made us; and no less than an in-  
finite almighty power is able to effect it.

And herein is my faith, that I firmly be-  
lieve the truth and reality of this divine effica-  
cy of the blood of Christ upon my soul and  
conscience, though I can neither think nor  
speak of the true nature of it as it is in it's  
self. And herein is my hope, that I have so  
absolute and intire dependance upon this my-  
stical washing for the renewing of my nature;  
that thro' the merits and virtue of it, I have a  
joyful expectation of appearing one day per-  
fectly

SERM. feſtly innocent and lovely in the ſight of that  
 I. *God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.*

So that we ſee the queſtion between us and the Socinians is not, whether the blood of Chriſt literally and properly waſhes away the guilt of Sin? for alas! who can form ſo groſs a notion as to think that blood ſhould waſh the ſoul, as water doth the body; or that waſhing in blood ſhould make one white? And who do they think is ſo ignorant as to deny that theſe forms of ſpeaking had alluſion to the legal ſprinklings or waſhings? What a world of fruitleſs elaborate niceties would never have ſeen the light, if this had been conſidered?

The true queſtion in diſpute is, whether the holy ſcriptures do not repreſent the manner of our conſciences being freed from guilt by the blood of Chriſt, under ſuch emblems as expreſs a real effect in nature? and whether by that analogy is not ſignified a real, proper, ſupernatural efficacy? By thus ſeparating the two parts of the queſtion which have been uſed to be treated of jointly, we divide the two diſtinct things to be conſidered in this myſtery; the ſimilitude only and reſemblance, from the reality and true ſubſtance of it. And thus this great myſtery of our religion will be ſet in a clear light; ſo as to remove all doubt, and give full ſatisfaction to a conſidering mind. Now,

There is hardly any place of Scripture which ſpeaks of the blood of Chriſt from whence  
 this

this doth not appear. I shall instance only in SERM.  
two or three. I.

In Zechariah xiii. 1. After the Prophet, five verses before, had been speaking of the Messiah, *when God would pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced.* It follows here, *in that day there shall be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness:* Which prophecy we find fulfilled, John xix. 3, 4. where it is said, *that one of the soldiers pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.* The mention of water here is very emphatical and remarkable for, as Doctor Lightfoot observes, 'tis not ordinary in nature that blood and water should come out of any wound so as to be distinctly discernable. Therefore, says he, it had something of mystery in it beyond nature, as is very probable from the solemn attestation which immediately follows of the truth of it; *he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.*

So that here we have the blood of Christ typified by the water of a fountain which washed away sin; and the completion of it by an issue of blood and water, the two things that were purgative of sin under the law; from which we can form no other notion than this, namely, that as water and blood purged away legal uncleanness, so the blood and water which issued from the wound in our Saviour's side cleanses the conscience from the guilt of sin. But how it works this wonderful



SERM. derful effect is not revealed to us; nor indeed  
 I. could it be so, in this state of blindness that  
 we are now in.

Again, another instance I shall give to this same purpose is that of the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness, which without question was a type of Christ, as appears from John iii. 14. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; even so must the son of man be lifted up.* And for the very same end and purpose too; for as the Israelites were to look at the brazen serpent and be cured of their stings; so 'tis said of Christ, *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.* And for the same reason, since it is said expressly, that *by his stripes we are healed.*

But it may be said, God cured them at the sight of it, and not the serpent. 'Tis true; but had it not been designed as an emblem of a real cure of our minds by the blood of Christ, God could have cured them without looking at it. Were it not plainly designed to shew that as the brazen serpent cured the stings of those fiery serpents in the wilderness; so the wounds of the soul and conscience from that enemy of mankind were to be cured by him who was to be lifted up upon a tree.

And further, as the manner of their being cured by looking on that brazen serpent was wholly unknown to them, so is the manner of our souls being cured and healed by the blood of Christ quite out of the reach of all our faculties.

The



The last instance I shall give you of this nature at present is this of the words of my text. SERM.  
I.

Here it is said that the blood of Christ purges the conscience from sin; it frees us from the guilt of sin actually committed; and this is said by way of excellence beyond the power of legal sprinkling and washings which procured a legal bodily purity. Nay farther the argument is stronger yet, for as Crellius himself observes the consequence is this, whereas those legal washings and sprinklings had really no power of cleansing, the blood of Christ hath a real energy and power of cleansing the conscience. From whence it naturally follows, that what power they had was borrowed from this true fountain which was opened for sin and for uncleanness.

Now because it was a very ready objection that blood and water were things material, and therefore could not work upon the soul; and that it was obvious to doubt what sort of purging this should be; therefore the Apostle adds this expression of *his being offered up through the eternal spirit*, which I observed at first was intended to signify the divine nature of Christ, that eternal spirit of the Godhead whereof he was a partaker. So that there was an union of his divine and human nature, at the same time that he became a sacrifice for us; the human nature only could suffer, but then it derived its virtue and power from its conjunction with the divinity; as the very same thing is exprest, 1. Pet. 3. 18. *For Christ*

SERM. *also hath once suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit,*  
 I. *(i. e.) by that eternal spirit of God to which his manhood was united; he was raised by that almighty power he was partaker of. So that the sense is this, who through his own eternal spirit offered up himself without spot.*

By which he would signify the great efficacy of the blood of Christ, that it was a divine supernatural operation; and therefore hath a power of cleansing, which the blood of no meer man could have; and also shew us that the manner of this operation is wholly spiritual, and consequently not to be conceived by us in this life; 'tis *what the eye cannot see, nor the ear hear, nor can it enter into the heart of man to imagine it.*

Having thus shewn you the true force of the Apostle's arguing in this place, and explained this great fundamental point of our christian faith; so as that you may know how it is that we are to believe that the blood of Christ washes away the guilt of our sins; and withal so as to lay open the fatal mistake of those men, who explain this point of doctrine in contradiction to us, and that unhappy fallacy that misled them; I shall at present only observe to you two things from these words.

1. That this washing away the guilt of our sins in the blood of Christ is not an effect that is absolutely and necessarily consequent to the shedding of it. 'Tis true, the merits  
 and

and virtue of it are infinite, as being the blood of a man offered up through the eternal spirit; the power and energy of it is divine, as being founded in the almighty power of God; and therefore 'tis in itself sufficient for cleansing the sins of the whole world; and if it wrought by the same necessity, and after the same manner that natural causes do, it would surely have that effect. But this cleansing is conditional, *the blood of Christ purges our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God* (i. e.) the blood of Christ washes away the guilt of those sins you have been formerly guilty of, to this intent that you might not defile your selves again by any such guilt, but keep your selves pure and holy for the future.

And therefore it is that the holy scripture speaking of our own concurrence with the work of God in our regeneration, uses these same expressions, *Cleanse your selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.* And again, *Wash you, make you clean,* (i. e.) (as it follows) *by putting away the evil of your doings.* So that washing and cleansing, as it is applied to us and made our act, hath no respect to what guilt we have already actually contracted, but to the preventing the falling into new sin.

Not but when we have done all we can, and have arriven to as great a degree of piety and holiness as we are capable of; yet even then God could not behold us but through the face of a mediator. The holiest person in the world is all over leprous, filthy and



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I.

abominable in the sight of God, till he is washed in the blood of the lamb. Our best actions are full of imperfections; they have such an alloy of sin, and mixture of infirmity, that if God in his infinite mercy had not opened this foundation for sin and for uncleanness, all mankind must have been eternally excluded from his presence.

But now, blessed be God, if by the assistance of his grace we mortify all corrupt and vitious inclinations, and break the power of sin, so as to have a true aversion to all sorts of it, and that the whole bent and tendency of our minds is set towards virtue and holiness; then it is that the virtue of Christ's blood takes place. Then by a divine unspeakable energy it will perfect the work, it will wash out all our stains and leave us intirely pure and innocent, as if we had never been polluted.

And this is a clear answer to that objection of the Socinians, that if the blood of Christ doth actually cleanse the soul from sin by a real proper efficacy, then the sins of the whole world would be cleansed; because we see this washing is not absolute but conditional. And this is the very reason of this expression of the *purging the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God*. And again in another place 'tis said, *Ye were not redeemed with silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ*, it is added, *from your vain conversation*. And so in other places the like expressions are sub-joined.

joined. From whence the Socinians would infer, that the washing of the blood of Christ refers only to those methods he hath used to preserve us from sin. But the true reason of adding these expressions was to prevent an error that it was natural for people to fall into, namely, that they might not think, as the Socinians object, that the blood of Christ would wash away the guilt of their sins whether they continued in them or no. It was very obvious for weak minds to run into this mistake, and to imagine that a strong faith was nothing more, than a firm belief that the blood of Christ would surely work this effect upon them. And notwithstanding all the caution of the divine writers in this matter, this very persuasion hath been made a ground of spiritual security; insomuch that multitudes, nay I may say whole societies of christians, have been apt to place the main stress and business of religion, in impregnating their minds with a violent persuasion and undoubting assurance that the guilt, even of those sins they continue in, shall be washed away in the blood of Christ.

But these expressions are added for these very people, and but for them, 'tis like, they would not have been added, and then the Socinians would have wanted this colour for an objection: And I shall only observe to them farther, that wherever the blood of Christ hath thoroughly wrought its effect, its always visible in the universal change of our lives



SERM. from all manner of dead works, to the service of the living God in all instances of virtue and holiness. But

2. The other thing I would observe to you from hence is, what a solid foundation this doctrine is for our hopes; and what a comfortable dependance it is for all true penitents and sincere Christians. Both the Socinians and we are agreed, that without the mercy and love of God we are all for ever lost and undone to all eternity. And then the question is, whether they or we have the best grounds to hope for it. The reason they give is, because God is infinitely good; for that very reason, say we, because he is good he can never cherish and embrace a sinner. Nor can a soul stained all over with the leprosie of sin ever appear lovely in his sight. A strange reason for men to give why God should receive them because they are sinners; whereas this is the only grounds of their condemnation.

But if God in his infinite wisdom and goodness, *hath opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness*, even the blood of the son of God, *shed through the eternal spirit*, and therefore of sufficient power to purge my conscience from the guilt of all my sin; to cleanse and purify my polluted soul, so as that my whole nature shall be intirely changed from sin and from uncleanness, to a state of perfect virtue and innocence. That from being stained all over with the leprosie of sin, so as that I am  
loath-

loathsome and abominable in the sight of S E R M.  
 God, I shall have my spots so washed away I.  
 that he shall see no sin in me; and that there  
 shall not be the least appearance of guilt left,  
 any more than if I had never sinned: So that  
 I shall appear amiable and lovely in his eyes,  
 with no less than the sweetness of a Cherub  
 and glory of an Angel. In short, if by this  
 mystical washing of his blood, our whole sin-  
 ful nature shall be transformed into the like-  
 ness of himself; this I say is a reasonable  
 ground of hope: For this is an expecta-  
 tion of love and acceptance, not because we  
 are polluted and defiled, but because we are  
 innocent and truly amiable. And this is what  
 we hope from thy blood, O blessed Jesu,  
 O! let us not be disappointed of our hope.

Now by what wondrous incomprehensible  
 efficacy this work is performed God only  
 knows, *such knowledge is too wonderful and  
 excellent for us, we cannot attain unto it;*  
 therefore we adore the mystery, and admire  
 the wisdom and goodness and power of God  
 in it. And 'tis this which makes it a sure  
 foundation for our hope, because we are not  
 able to form any notion of the true manner of  
 it. Alas! could our limited understanding  
 reach it, it could have no such effect, no, 'tis  
 a work of no less than almighty unlimited  
 power, *'tis the Lord's doing, and 'tis marvel-  
 lous in our eyes.*

The sad degeneracy of our nature, and in-  
 deed our present wretched condition of infir-  
 mity,

SERM. mity, would incline one to think it impossible  
 I. for this effect to be wrought in us; *but with*  
 { *God all things are possible*; and our trust is in  
 the *unsearchable riches of Christ*; and therefore  
 we believe, Lord help our unbelief.

Let therefore the Socinians take notice  
 that whilst they know not where to fix, here-  
 in is our glory and our rejoycing; that by the  
 blood of Christ we are not only freed from pu-  
 nishment, but from sin. And this is the true  
 quiet of a man's mind, and the tranquillity  
 of his soul; to be freed from all sense of guilt.  
 This is truly the peace of God, and the only  
 thing that can preserve a considering mind  
 from deep despair, and keep it above all de-  
 spondency. 'Tis this alone can raise our  
 hopes to a firm expectation of all the glorious  
 promises of God.

So that every truly sincere and humble per-  
 son who groans under a feeling sense of his  
 former guilt may say with comfort, *Why art*  
*thou so full of heaviness, O my soul, and why*  
*art thou so disquieted within me?* For though  
 my sins be as scarlet, yet *thou shalt purge me*  
*with hyssop and I shall be clean, thou shalt*  
*wash me and I shall be whiter than snow*;  
 and in thy own good time, shalt present me  
 spotless before the presence of thy glory.

How shall we express this our glorying in  
 the cross of Christ, and in him crucified?  
 And how shall we describe that peace of God  
 within us, that is the result of a fixed depen-  
 dance upon this hope? Alas! 'tis not to be  
 exprest,



expressed, 'tis conceived only in the minds of SERM.  
 sincere Christians who are in an habitual state I.

The sudden raptures of beginners in religion, and violent excursions of a warm imagination, are but like flashes in the lower region of the air; this is a beam of glory from the father of light. This full assurance of being washed from all our guilt in the blood of the lamb is a thought that overcomes the mind, and leaves us in silent wonder. We know not what to say of it now; for in truth our time of rejoycing is to come. 'Tis sweet and cordial to the soul that possesses it; let them enjoy it for the present, and it will one day break out like the morning sun from a cloud, and display itself in rays of unconceiveable brightness; and then shall be put into our mouths that new song in the Revelations, *Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing: For thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

And therefore unto him that hath thus loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; to him be glory, and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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# S E R M O N II.

That the Blood of Christ cleanses us  
from Sin.

P A R T II.

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HEBR. ix. 14

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who  
through the eternal spirit offered himself  
without spot to God, purge your conscience  
from dead works, to serve the living God?*


SERM.  
II.

**I**N a former discourse on these words, after I had shewn how the Apostle in them had compared the blood of the legal sacrifices with that of Christ in several instances; and how the purging in the text was to be literally understood of washing and sprinkling; before I spoke more particularly of the virtue of the blood of Christ in respect of men, I observed to you these two things.

1. That it was an opinion universally prevailing among all nations that washing of the body was necessary in order to take away the guilt of sin.

2. That



2. That the whole custom of washing with SERM.  
water and sprinkling with blood referred to II.  
the washing away of sin by the blood of   
Christ.

Then I laid before you the opinion of the Socinians in this point, together with the ground of their error; from whence it appeared that the true question in dispute between them and us on this head of the present controversy, was not, whether the blood of Christ literally and properly washes away the guilt of sin? but whether the holy scriptures do not represent the manner of our consciences being freed from guilt by the blood of Christ under such emblems as express a real effect in nature? And whether by that analogy is not signified a real proper supernatural efficacy?

Thus we divide the two parts of the question, which having been treated of jointly hath necessarily caused confusion.

Now as to the first part of the question, whether the holy scriptures do not represent the manner of our consciences being freed from guilt by the blood of Christ under such emblems as express a real effect in nature? This I believe no one can deny, for washing and purging and cleansing &c. are real effects in nature, and these are the things by which this great mystery is revealed to us, which is in itself unconceivable in this our present condition of infirmity.

As


SERM.

II.

As to the second, whether by that analogy we are not to understand some real proper supernatural efficacy of the blood of Christ, by which the guilt of our sins are wholly done away? This I think appeared from those instances I made use of in my last discourse, namely that of Zacharias's prophecy of a fountain being opened for sin and for uncleanness; that of the brazen serpent in the wilderness; and from this of the words of my text; and therefore now I am to make this yet more evident.

But before I proceed to this, it will be necessary to observe to you here one great error which runs through all that Socinus and Crellius say upon this head of the controversy, and that is their confounding every where *liberatio a pœnâ*, and *liberatio a reatu*, which it is plain they do industriously; for it is a plausible thing to say as they do, that God can remit freely what sins he pleases, he can forgive whom he will without any other prospect than that of the eternal goodness of his own nature: And for us to say that he cannot forgive without a satisfaction, is to deny him the same liberty we take ourselves, and allow him less power and goodness than we do a man.

But even on the supposition the Socinians go, namely that all punishment of sin is purely arbitrary and an immediate positive act of God, yet it were injurious to his nature to let sin go unpunished; because he being as they suppose

suppose him infinitely good, he must from SERM.  
 that internal rectitude of his own nature be II.  
 supposed to love all goodness and hate all evil 

(i. e.) in other words to reward one and punish the other; and therefore as Anselmus argues, proving the necessity of the incarnation of the son of God in order to an atonement for sin, *it is as absurd to say that God can remit sin without some atonement, as to say that God can do an ill thing.* To wink at a sin, and let it pass without censure or punishment; nay to embrace and cherish the sinner, is really an evil thing. *Non debet tolerare Deus* (says he) *quo nihil injustius toleratur, nihil autem injustius toleratur quam quo nihil minus est tolerandum.* And therefore what he would infer follows directly; *Quapropter non pertinet ad ejus libertatem, ac benignitatem, ac voluntatem peccantem impunitum dimittere.* It is a plain contradiction in respect of God, and doth not touch his power, or his freedom, or his goodness; and the contrary would be a manifest injury to them.

Let us put this case in the person of a merciful prince, and suppose that he should forgive murder and robbery, and treat the committers of them on the level with others that were not guilty of any such crime; the Socinians would cry out upon him for an unjust man, a cherisher of villany, and call him a man of a weak and impotent spirit, that could not bear the thoughts of a just punishment inflicted on wilful offenders; and yet this very  
 indecency



SERM. indecency will they charge upon God. O but  
 II. say they the prince ought not to remit their  
 punishment because of the sanction of human  
 laws and security and peace of the publick;  
 but where they repent and amend God may  
 forgive them, and it is consistent with his  
 goodness so to do. But here they go upon  
 another false supposition, which they every  
 where overlook, and that is that men could  
 have repented and amended without that su-  
 pernatural assistance of grace purchased for us  
 by the death of Christ; if we should grant  
 them that God could forgive all sins that are  
 repented of and amended, yet without the  
 death of Christ this is an impossible supposi-  
 tion, for no man would have repented or a-  
 mended of any sin. So that here they are un-  
 der a necessity of one of these two things,  
 either of absolutely denying the necessity of  
 any such supernatural assistance; which as yet  
 they only insinuate; or of saying that this  
 grace might be afforded without his death, and  
 that it is no purchase of it, which in effect  
 they plainly affirm. But thus the very same  
 difficulty returns, why God should reward a  
 sin with the greatest act of favour and love?  
 And why an act of guilt should entitle a man  
 to the greatest grace and bounty of God, the  
 immediate communication of his holy spirit to  
 the guilty person? Socinus seems aware of the  
 difficulties that arise to his opinion from the  
 notion of grace, and for that reason he and all  
 his followers lay so little stress upon it.



If the punishment of sin were wholly arbitrary, and nothing contrary to the nature of God, what reason can be given why he should punish any sin? or inflict eternal torments upon his creatures whose sins he might remit without any injury to his nature? If it be no way injurious to the rest of his attributes, surely it would be much for the glory of his goodness and mercy to remit all sin; and he certainly would do this if it were to be done, for he declares, *he wills not the death of any sinner, and would have all men to be saved.* They own it is injurious to his justice to forgive those that do not repent; but if to remit the punishment of their sin be actually to do away their guilt and make them good, which the Socinians all suppose, then there is no necessity of repentance, for by remitting their punishment they are ipso facto in a State of innocence.

It is plain that which led men into this error was the making a judgment of divine punishments from those notions they had of temporal ones, and whatever they conceived of one, they imagined must be true of the other.

If a king remits the punishment of a crime all is well, the malefactor's mind is at ease, and there is no more of it. But God doth not forgive as man forgives, nor doth he punish as man punishes, *His thoughts are not like our thoughts, nor are his ways like our ways.* A foolish presumption that they must needs be so, hath been the cause of almost all  
the

SERM. the errors which men have run into concern-  
 II. ing revealed religion from the first appearing  
 of it in the world to this day. But

There are two things farther to be considered in the nature of sin and its punishment in another world which have no relation at all to temporal guilt or its punishment, which is altogether arbitrary. The first is, that there is an inseparable connection between guilt and misery, so that sin will become its own punishment in another world, or at least in a great degree; the eternal punishment of the damned will be the natural result of their sins, so that they shall become their own tormentors. And therefore when we speak of God's remitting the punishment of sin, and think no farther than we do in cases of temporal punishment, we know not what we say. For God to forgive the punishment of a sinner, is to render him good and holy, and perfectly to do away the sin, so as to put him into the same condition as if he had never committed it; and thus by taking away the cause, that misery, which is the effect and necessary fatal consequence of it is removed. Nay though a man repents of any sin, yet there is nothing in the nature of the thing to hinder the effect of it in another world; some divine work of God and sanctification of the spirit is necessary to remove the guilt which we have actually contracted to prevent the misery which is the necessary consequence of it in another world. But this will clear up farther, if we consider

Consider that other thing which hath no re-  
lation to any guilt or punishment purely tem-  
poral.

SERM.

II.

And that is, that actual pollution and defilement of the soul by sin, the effects of moral evil in the mind, is as real as any physical effect upon the body, and makes as great an alteration in the soul, though it be not discernable to us in this world; so that sin is a real disease of the mind which must be healed by his blood who is the physician of our Souls. We must consider guilt in the soul as mortal wounds and distempers in the body which must be cured, or eternal death will ensue; (i. e.) all the dreadful consequences of sin in another world; and therefore it is that the punishments of another world go by the name of death every where in scripture; because they are as sure and necessary effects of sin, as temporal death is of mortal distempers in the body.

Still what is objected here is that repentance alters the man, and the mind is changed with it. It is true repentance makes a great alteration for the better, it checks the distemper, and puts a stop to its course; and so hinders it from proceeding to such inveteracy that it shall prove mortal. But as a gangrene or any other pernicious loathsome humour, though the course of it is stopt, and that it is cut off from any farther infection, when it hath prevailed long in the body leaves deep and lasting impressions, and such remains of itself as are



SERM. never thoroughly removed: So it is with a  
 II. vitious habit, though the power of it is broke  
 by repentance, the malignancy and evil effects  
 of it prevented for the time to come; yet it  
 leaves sad effects on the mind, which we are  
 to lament and bemoan while we live: And  
 even for the time to come, the vitious incli-  
 nation is seldom so entirely destroyed but that  
 there is some tendency to the same disease of  
 the mind again, some sparks are left to be  
 kindled into a flame.

The great mistake they go upon here is,  
 that a man by repentance and conversion shall  
 so alter the whole frame and temper of his  
 body and mind, that he shall be entirely in-  
 nocent and perfectly holy. If this were so, I  
 must confess it would take away much of  
 the force of this reasoning; but it is so far  
 from this, that the scriptures represent us as  
 miserably defiled with guilt and sin in our  
 most perfect state in this life; the most per-  
 fect men are lepers in the sight of God till  
 their leprosie is cured and actually cleansed;  
 and the blessing and advantage of repentance  
 is, that it puts the mind into a disposition to  
 have a thorough cure wrought by the virtue  
 of Christ's blood. And it was from this mi-  
 serable condition of infirmity that the best  
 of men are in, that several of the fathers  
 inferred the necessity of the incarnation of  
 a divine person; because the fall had so  
 altered our whole nature, that the change  
 and



and restitution of it to its primitive state did SERM.  
 require no less an infinite power, than the II.

first creation of us; insomuch that they thought this must be effected by that λόγος or word by which all things were first made. And to this St. Anathanasius in his book of the incarnation of Christ applies Heb. ii. 10. in the verse before it is said, *that Christ should taste death for every man,* and the reason follows, *for it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings:* The intent of which is to shew that He alone was to free us from that state of corruption, who was the word of God by which we were first created. And he improves this argument farther by observing, that man being the image of God, and having lost it by the fall, it could be restored no otherwise than by him who is the image of God. Τὸ ἄν ἔδει ποιεῖν τὸν θεὸν &c.

*For what can we conceive necessary to have been done by God, but that he should restore mankind to the knowledge of himself, by that image of himself which they lost.* From thence he infers the impossibility of this being effected by man or Angel: And then it follows, ὅθεν ὁ τῷ θεῷ λόγος δι' ἑαυτῷ παρεγένετο, ἵν' ὡς ἐκὼν ἂν τῷ πατρὶ τὸν κατ' εἰκόνα ἀνθρώπου ἀνακτίσαι, δυναθῇ. *Therefore the word of God came of himself, that as he was the image of God so he might re-*

SERM. *store man to the same image by a new crea-*  
 II. *tion, ἀνακτίσαι to make him over again. I*  
 shall not now trouble you with shewing how others of the fathers have improved this argument to the same purpose, and do every where suppose the condition of man after the fall, even in the best state, to be miserably polluted and defiled, insomuch that it required no less than some almighty divine power and efficacy to renew his nature, and restore the image of God; which could have been effected no otherwise than by him, *who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.*

And thus we see the true question between us and the Socinians is not, whether God may remit the punishment of a sin without a satisfaction? which upon the supposition the Socinians go is unquestionably true (i. e.) that the punishment of sin is altogether arbitrary, and that remitting the punishment doth *ipso facto* do away all the guilt; which as we have seen are both false, and mistakes that men are naturally led into by conceiving of divine punishments under the notion of temporal ones. Alas! the punishment is so inseparable from the sin, that there is no forgiving it without removing the guilt: To forgive a sinner is to change

change the man; not only to make him leave S E R M.  
off his sin, but he must be perfectly innocent II.  
and put into the same condition as if he had  
never sinned. For otherwise the question be-  
tween us plainly comes up to this, whether  
God can look upon a sinner as a holy person?  
And whether out of the abundance of his  
goodness, he can love sin, and cherish it after  
the same manner that he doth virtue and in-  
nocence?

So that now the true question is, how this  
shall be effected? how it shall be brought to  
pass, that a vile wretched sinner shall not only  
leave off his sins, and become another man  
for the future; but how all the guilt that he  
hath contracted shall be so done away that  
God may behold and love him as perfectly  
holy and innocent? this is the great mystery  
of our redemption; this is what the infinite  
wisdom of God hath contrived for us through  
the virtue of Christ's blood. The pardoning  
of sin is a complicated notion, and includes  
not only the remitting of our punishment,  
but the doing away all our contracted guilt;  
transforming our whole nature from sin to a  
state of perfect purity and holiness; so that a  
great sinner shall be truly righteous and re-  
warded as such, and remain as such for ever in  
the presence of God, in the same degree of  
love and purity with those glorious beings  
that never sinned.

It is this that we can never sufficiently ad-  
mire, and it is a work worthy of that asto-  
nishing



SERM.

II.



nishing dispensation of providence the incarnation and sufferings of a divine person. It is so great a thing that it required no less than infinite wisdom to contrive and infinite power to effect it; and nothing short of this could ever have raised our minds to a belief that it was possible; but by what wonderful operation of the spirit of God, and unsearchable divine efficacy this will be done we know not; we are utterly ignorant of the manner of it. What is revealed to us is that it is done, 1<sup>st</sup>, by washing away the guilt of our sins in the blood of Christ; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, having his righteousness imputed to us: As to the imputation of his righteousness, I am to consider that hereafter.

As to the power of the blood of Christ in doing away all our guilt, I have already in some instances observed how this is represented to us by such metaphors and analogies as express a real effect in nature, and that under them is signified a supernatural divine efficacy, the manner of which is wholly unconceivable; and therefore I shall now proceed to make this matter clearer by some farther instances.

1. And the first I shall mention is that passage of our Saviour's washing his disciples feet the night before his crucifixion. John 13. when St. Peter would have hindered him, at the 8<sup>th</sup> verse, *thou shalt never wash my feet*, Christ answers him, *if I wash thee not thou hast*



*hast no part with me*: By which was signified SERM.  
II.  
the mystical washing of that blood which was to be shed the next day, and which he was then representing in that sacrament he was then instituting. It is true the application he makes of this action is to recommend humility and meekness; but that this was not primarily intended is plain from those words of his to St. Peter upon his refusal, *what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*; which could not be meant of humility, because that they understood very well, they could not but know what it was to wash one another's feet, as their Lord had washed theirs.

But that which puts this beyond doubt is, that our Saviour before that makes the true application of it as far as they were able then to apprehend it. When St. Peter heard that unless Christ washed his feet he had no part in him, then said he, *Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head*, to which our Saviour answers, *He that is washed need only to have his feet washed and is clean every whit*; the plain meaning of which is this; the washing I now use is only typical, as all religious washings are, of that spiritual washing you do not yet understand, and therefore the washing only a part of the body is as full of signification, as if it had been done all over; since it is but a symbol and representation of that washing, which shall entirely cleanse the soul from sin. And therefore upon his washing

S E R M. of them he immediately says, *ye are clean*;

II. Of which words Sclichtingius in his comment remarks that, *a propria significatione transit ad metaphoricam*: It is true he doth, and for that very reason it is plain he speaks here of the mystical washing of his blood which is never the less real, because it is spoke of in a metaphor; for if it was spoke of at all it must be spoke of in a metaphor, and so are all the mysteries of our religion as well as this.

Another thing I shall instance to this purpose is that of baptism; it is true the dipping all over or plunging in primitive use did well represent the being buried with Christ, and the rising again with him to a life of righteousness; and therefore the Apostles very aptly applied it thus; but nothing is more evident than that the chief thing intended and represented by it is the cleansing of our souls by the blood of Christ. Says Ananias to St. Paul, *arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*; (i. e.) the sins of thy former life, as is plain from the text. And accordingly this is the intent of this sacrament; and the sense the whole christian church hath had of it is, that by baptism a man is cleansed from all original and actual guilt: Not that washing in water can cleanse the soul, but because in this significant type or emblem there is an immediate application of that unknown virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ which is here signified by the washing of water.

water. And the reason why sprinkling only SERM.  
II.  
is retained instead of it is, because it being  
an emblem of some supernatural operation,

it is as full of signification as if the body were washed all over. So that to this may be applied that saying of our Saviour, *He that is baptized need only have his face sprinkled, and is clean every whit*: And this was the meaning of that expression of John the baptist, *I baptize you with water to repentance; I only receive profelytes by the usual ceremony of washing, but he that comes after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*: His shall be the true baptism in that spiritual power and divine efficacy which is represented by the water of baptism; and he shall cleanse your consciences from all sin; which cleansing is here expressed by *fire*, which is more purgative than water, and most active in refining any thing and purging away it's dross. Which opinion gave occasion to that custom among the Æthiopians and others of adding fire to their baptisms; which, as Grotius observes made some bold transcribers leave out the word *fire* in some copies, purely in opposition to this custom.

Another instance I shall give to this purpose is that of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, wherein the power and efficacy of Christ's blood is represented to us by the nourishing our bodies. We know not how the spirit of God works upon our minds, nor  
how.



SERM. how this actual communication of it is the effect of that crucified body and blood signified by those elements; but it is represented to us here by an obvious effect in nature, and the inward thing signified is *the strengthening and refreshing our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.* But how the divine virtue of that blood is communicated to our souls we know not; but we comfort ourselves with an assurance that it is done by some supernatural efficacy, of which we can now form no manner of conception.

This sacramental eating and drinking is a lively application of the whole power and virtue of Christ's crucified body and blood; it is an actual participation of him, as real to the soul as nourishment to the body; which is the reason why we are under the gospel encouraged to eat the flesh and drink the blood of our expiatory sacrifice, which was peremptorily denied to all before under the severest penalty: Nay more, the blood of the great anniversary sacrifice of expiation was not sprinkled on the people, but was ordered to be sprinkled on the pavement before the mercy seat, Levit. 16. for the very same reason they were forbid the blood of their sin offerings; because that blood was not yet shed, which had the true and real virtue of cleansing them from sin; and therefore there could be as yet no immediate actual application of the divine power and energy of it to the souls of men.

I hope



I hope I need not multiply instances any farther to make it appear, that by the virtue and merits of Christ's death we are to understand some divine supernatural energy, answerable to those real effects in nature by which it is revealed and represented to us. SERM.  
II.

This of *washing and cleansing* is the analogy generally used in scripture. Heb. 10. 22. the cleansing of our souls is expressed by, *having our hearts sprinkled, and our bodies washed with pure water*; because the whole intent of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices, and washing with water was to express this efficacy of the blood of Christ in washing away the guilt of sin, and therefore it is called Heb. 12. 24. *the blood of sprinkling*; not that ever it was sprinkled upon the people, but to express the reality of it's effect upon the consciences of those who partake of the power and virtue of it. And the reason why the sprinkling only of the blood of the sacrifices was sufficient, was to shew that that effect typified by it was purely spiritual, and therefore need not have been represented by washing all over.

It is by the hidden virtue of this blood that that union of all good people with Christ is performed, by means of which he shall *draw us after him*, as he himself expresseth it. And it is by the secret almighty virtue of this blood that we shall be transformed into his likeness, and appear as he is at the resurrection.

From

SERM.

II.

From all which it appears, that if we will understand scripture as we do other things, and form to our selves conceptions of the nature of this mystery, after the same manner we do of the other mysteries of christianity, we must be of this opinion. This is the most apt and obvious notion we can frame of this great point of fundamental faith.

Having thus considered the virtue of Christ's blood in washing away the guilt of our sins, I should come now to consider that other benefit of his passion ; namely, the imputation of his righteousness to us.

But because the time will not admit of this, I shall at present only obviate one objection which seems to lie against my whole design in these Discourses ; and that is, that the christian church hath never yet explained this doctrine in the same manner that I have done. I must confess, had I explained any point of christian doctrine in contradiction to the continued sense of the church, there I had been justly blameable ; and this is the very thing by which I argue the persons I am confuting inexcusable, because they venture to explain the manner of our salvation by Christ in direct opposition to the sense of the whole christian church.

It is true, I carry the point a little farther than they have done expressly, not but that they speak the substance of what I say, as I hope to make appear, but this is no place for it. And the reason why they have not been more  
express

express and distinct in their explication of this SER M.  
doctrine, was because there never was any oc- II.  
casion for their being so; till the time of So-  
cinus the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction was  
not openly and expressly denied; there was  
never before that any occasion of being so  
curious in it, and distinguishing so nicely,  
till the Socinian hypothesis had so perplexed  
the christian faith, that there seemed to me  
no clear way of extricating people fully out of  
this labyrinth without this clew; by the help  
of which I meet with not one rub in the way,  
no difficulty but what admits of an easy so-  
lution, and no objections of the Socinians but  
what it gives an easy and satisfactory answer  
to; and this is a great presumption that I am  
in the right.

The only thing liable to exception in all I  
have said, is that assertion of a real, proper,  
supernatural efficacy which I attribute to the  
blood of Christ; but then the manner of it I  
contend to be incomprehensible. I oppose  
those words to that notion of the Socinians  
which runs through all their writings on this  
subject, who affirm all the virtue and merit of  
it to be only that of a meer condition. And  
whosoever denies this real proper efficiency,  
must in the same breath say that it is only a  
metaphorical efficiency, and then they and  
the Socinians are very good friends; for if you  
grant this efficacy to be figurative in any sense,  
they are in with you immediately.

You



SERM. You will say the church all along expressed

II. the power of Christ's death by the words *virtue* and *merit*. Yes, and I hope it will do so to the end of the world. And so likewise do the Socinians express it by the words *virtue*, *merit*, *power*, *energy*; but when they and we come to explain our selves we divide in this very point, whether that *virtue*, *merit*, *energy*, &c. be that of a meer condition; or whether it be real and proper. If they would allow this, we have no farther controversy with them, if they would not contradict themselves again in this, as they do on all other occasions.

I have this satisfaction however, that the whole objection amounts to this, *viz.* that whereas the Socinians attribute too little, I attribute too much to the blood of Christ. I must own my opinion is, we can never attribute enough to it.

If any person doth not like the words *efficacy*, or *efficiency*, wherever he meets them let him leave them out, and put in the word *virtue* instead of them, and that will answer all my purposes as well. And so we are still agreed, and all that we both affirm is, that the virtue of it is real and proper, and the manner of it's operation spiritual and incomprehensible.

All that I contend for is, that there is some divine supernatural operation signified by those expressions which are made use of to reveal this mystery to us; and for any one to take  
the



the words *virtue* and *merit* in that limited sense which this objection supposes, is to allow the power of Christ's blood only in respect of God; whereas it is plain the Scripture speaks very much of the power of it in respect of men, nay, is much more frequent and express in it than in the other. And God forbid we should not understand it so, and whosoever would go about to perswade us out of this, would endeavour to rob us of a great part of our spiritual comfort and dependance.

As to my differing from those persons who have wrote since Socinus in defence of this great doctrine of our religion, I have only this to say, that I leave my manner of explaining this doctrine and managing this controversy to be valued according to the evidence it carries along with it, and let the thing speak for itself.

If those learned men who have wrote against the Socinians had considered this doctrine as a mystery, and treated it as such, they would have performed what I have done much better. And I doubt not now the hint is given, to see this improved against all our modern errors beyond any thing I can or ought to pretend to.

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## S E R M O N III.

The true christian Doctrine of the  
Satisfaction of Christ vindicated.

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A C T S xx. 28.

*To feed the Church of God, which he hath  
purchased with his own blood.*

SERM.  
III.

**T**HE whole verse runs thus, *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, &c.* The argument here used to enforce this exhortation to the pastors of the church to take care of their flock is, because they are a purchase made by the blood of Christ, who is God. And the text is so plain and expressive both of the divinity and satisfaction of our Saviour, that it cannot be conceived how they could have been expressed to more advantage in so few words. The word in the greek is θεος, the very name by which the eternal God is signified, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, which he (i. e.) God hath purchased διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, with his own proper blood. The evasion of the Socinians is that the blood of Christ is called the blood of God, as Christ himself

himself is God's; he was himself in the power and at the command of God, and so was his blood, and therefore it was the blood of God. If you urge that thus it could not be said to be his proper blood, the answer is that proper signifies no more than his own; and his own signifies no more than what is in his possession. No other answer in truth ought to be given to this, than that if it be so, it is not in the power of language to express this doctrine to us upon supposition it were true; and that we never know when we understand any thing that is said in scripture. My design is not to insist upon the divinity of Christ here. Their evasion of the other thing contained in the words is much of the same nature: It is true say they he purchased or bought the church with his own blood, because by that he obtained power of delivering the church from punishment, and bringing them to heaven. If you urge that according to themselves he bought that power at least; their perpetual answer is that he bought or purchased nothing properly, that it is nothing but a mere figurative way of speaking, and could never be applied to the blood of Christ in any propriety of speech. Now upon this principle there is nothing in the Apostle's argument; they must look to the flock of Christ because he hath obtained power to take care of them himself. This indeed is a very figurative way of persuasion without a motive: But upon the true principle of the



SERM. christian church the argument is very strong  
 III. and powerful; for so they were to take care  
 of their flocks because they cost so dear. They  
 were in truth and reality purchased with a  
 price of inestimable value, no less than the  
 blood of a divine person, who was himself  
 very God, and therefore called so in this text.

In discoursing of this part of the great mystery of our redemption, I shall observe the same method I have already done in other parts of it, namely to set down the opinion of the Socinians concerning satisfaction; that by bringing the controversy on its true foundation we may cut off every thing superfluous, and discuss it with more brevity and perspicuity. In plain terms they flatly deny the word as not being in scripture; and for the thing itself, Socinus reckons it among those things, *quæ plane impossibilia sunt*. And adds a little after, *quare nequeo satis mirari quid iis in mentem venerit qui nobis primam istam satisfactionem fabricarunt*. (Socin. de Ser. par. 3. cap. 6.) They allow all that can be demanded in the death of Christ, but any virtue or power in it with respect to God. The frequent mention of our redemption by his death in scripture is not, says Socinus, *ut alicujus ad nos redimendos occultæ virtutis quam mors Christi habeat, et quam omnes per se perspicuè non videant, admoneamur*, (Socin. de Serv. par. 2. p. 147.) As far as satisfaction implies the performing those conditions which



which are required by God, and so fulfilling his desire, they allow it. Nay they will allow the strict propriety of the words redemption and purchase in every instance but one, and say that this price is payed to no body. (Socin. de Serv. par. 2. p. 143.) His blood is a price say they, *non ex parte Dei*, for it was he that gave it; and therefore he could not accept it: But however it is such a price as purchases (i. e.) obtains salvation in respect of us. (Socin. de Serv. par. 2. cap. 2. p. 144.) In short, you can hardly ask them any thing which they will not allow, till you touch upon any secret hidden virtue in the sufferings of Christ; or any true or real value in themselves with respect to God, by way of compensation to his justice; or a means of preserving any of his attributes inviolable in the salvation of sinners.

They argue from reason, and the nature of God that the doctrine of satisfaction is impossible. They raise many seeming absurdities and contradictions in it, and then find themselves under a necessity of turning all the scripture expressions relating to it, into metaphor and analogy: And from thence again, by a shameful circle in arguing, besides a gross mistake of the analogy visible through all their works, they make this inference, that therefore there is nothing in them but figure, and that they import nothing that is true and real in respect of God. Socinus argues that the word redemption is never used in a true

SERM. and proper sense. *Quamvis videatur metaphoricè fortassis id posse fieri.* And again, *huius verbi metaphoricus usus frequentissimus est.* (Socin. de Serv. par. 2. cap. 1. p. 141.) And in the same chapter after he has argued this sufficiently, *Ego verò non ita hebetem te esse sat scio, ut verbi redimendi metaphorâ agnitâ, non videas etiam eâdem metaphorâ Christum dictum fuisse redemptionis nostræ pretium.— adeò ut si de vero pretio sit sermo necesse sit illud Satanæ persolutum.* (Crell, respon. ad Gr. cap. 8. p. 178.) And again, *ideo in hac redemptionis nostræ metaphorâ Deus non consideratur, &c.* and so on. And Volkelius, speaking of the scripture phrases which express redemption by the blood of Christ, argues thus, *quos quidem loquendi modos metaphoricòs plane esse inde patet, quod nullus ostendi potest cui pretium persolutum fuerit; ut quidem in propriâ redemptione fieri necesse est.* And afterwards says he, *Quod si quis proprietatem vocabuli nimium urgere velit is non animadvertit quod ipse Deus et Moses populum Israeliticum redemisse dicantur.* (Volk. lib. 3. cap. 18. p. 208.) I need not multiply quotations to this purpose; whosoever is acquainted with the Socinian tracts will find they run altogether upon this strain. I shall only observe that instead of the word satisfaction, which they explode, they for the most part use the words *liberatio*, and *redemptio*.

And now we may justly wonder by what strong delusion men have been carried on to write

write so many bulky volumes to prove what is and must be allowed them; namely, that the words satisfaction, redemption, price, purchase, &c. with respect to the death and sufferings of Christ, are not to be understood strictly and properly; but contain in them something of metaphor and analogy. This is all a mistake of the question, which is not whether they are figurative and analogous, but whether they or we mistake in the design, and application, and allusion of this analogy. They have taken strange advantage against the orthodox, for want of this concession. Surely there is a great deal of difference between a real true redemption and satisfaction; and that which is literally and properly so. By a real true redemption and satisfaction, I mean that which is as real in respect of God as a proper satisfaction is in respect of men; the not observing this distinction, and the analogy contained in the words, I say, hath been the occasion of long and intricate disputes, without touching the true point in controversy: Men run into nice divisions of trade and merchandize; and refine upon debtor, and creditor; bonds and obligations; captivity and imprisonments; and are very curious in their distinctions of adequate and equivalent payments; as if the redemption of man by the blood of Christ were a perfect bargain and sale; and as if we must not believe this mystery unless we can compute to a farthing what the blood of Christ was worth:



SERM. What is all this to the giving us any light into  
 III. this profound and unfathomable mystery?

This is all specious trifling, and these things should be exploded divinity, for the same reason that our Saviour drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, because they prophane it. The multitude of Socinian tracts that run upon this strain are but systems of mock divinity, and become the counter rather than the pulpit; and it is below the dignity of christianity to trace them in all the labyrinths they have cut out to lose themselves and others. It is a real harm and prejudice to christianity, when we labour to bring down that hidden unconceivable part of this glorious mystery of the gospel to the level of worldly objects; whereas that part of it which is revealed, was designed to raise and elevate our minds above the world, and all things in it, to the contemplation of heavenly things: this noble lofty flight we quit, to grapple with them in the dirt; where it is but a chance whether we do, or do not get the better of them.

This is all the advantage they have against us, and they make notable use of it. Grotius from 1 Peter i. 18, 19. verses, where it is said, *we are redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ*; argues thus, *solent autem aurum et argentum esse verè pretium, non figuratè; quare et sanguis æquè aut multò etiam magis verè sit pretium necesse est.* Crellius answers, he



he sees no consequence in this, and forms SERM.  
 it into this argument, *Sanguis Christi majus* III.  
*quiddam est argento et auro, qua pretium est.*  
*Ergò, æquè, aut multò etiam magis propriè*  
*pretium est.* And pursues the absurdity through  
 the whole chapter; and adds, *Quod si Grotius,*  
*ex voce pretii id quod vult concludere cupit, ne-*  
*cesse est ut ostendat pretii vocem propriè hic ac-*  
*cipi, non vero pro impendio tantum sumi.* (Crell.  
 Resp. ad Grot. cap. 8.) A task which if it had  
 been possible that great man would have per-  
 formed. Again, in the same chapter in an-  
 swer to what Grotius argues very closely, *si ex*  
*morte Christi per se liberationis nostræ effectus*  
*non est consecutus, nihil opus erat Christum et*  
*Apostolos aut Redemptionis aut Pretii memi-*  
*nisse; præsertim toties.* If there were not  
 something peculiar in the death of Christ  
 which of it's own nature were the cause of our  
 redemption, the holy scriptures would not have  
 expressed it to us so frequently by the words  
 Price and Redemption. If he means, says  
 Crellius, *non fuisse justam aliquam causam*  
*quæ suaderet ut hæc metaphorâ crebriùs ute-*  
*rentur.* I see no consequence; for he argues  
 they might use the words redemption and  
 price, *propter maximam similitudinem libera-*  
*tionis nostræ, cum redemptione propriè dictâ.*  
*Nequè verò novum aut inelegans censerì debet*  
*pretio comparari id ex quo effectus, ad quem id*  
*dicitur intervenisse, per accidens tantum conse-*  
*quitur.* So that while one contends for the  
 strictest propriety of the words, the other

SERM. turns them into mere simile and forms of  
 III. speaking. Crellius gave the true reason why  
 the scriptures make use of these words; because of the similitude or resemblance between our redemption by Christ, and that which is properly and literally so. *Et quia magnum ad eam perficiendam intervenisset impendium.* But his consequence and Socinus's is quite wrong, that therefore there is nothing in the death of Christ really and in truth answerable to redemption by a price among men; and that our redemption which is the effect of it follows only *per accidens*. The whole force of their arguing upon this head may be reduced to this one Syllogism.

If the words price and redemption &c. are not to be understood literally and properly, they import nothing more than pure similitude and metaphor. But they are not to be understood literally and properly. Therefore they import nothing more than pure similitude and metaphor. The minor must be granted them, which hath been the proposition always vigorously opposed with great learning and pains. It is the consequent of the major that is to be denied, and is so downright a falsity, that the supposing it true destroys all revealed religion. It would leave us no mysteries in christianity; it would not only destroy this doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, but the very being of a Deity, and all the things relating to another world.

And

And thus we are come to a true state of the SERM. question between the Socinians and us, which II. is not whether those expressions in scripture

redemption, price, purchase &c. are to be understood strictly and properly? Which we deny as well as they. And therefore they must begin again, and carve out a new hypothesis in religion. We allow there is metaphor and analogy in them, as they speak at every turn. Nay, perhaps there is more of figure in them than they are willing to allow; and therefore we are now to consider the difference between them and us in the import and allusion of this figure and analogy.


That expression of redeeming us, they say, is spoke of Christ by the same figure that it is spoke of God and of Moses. (Volke, lib. 3. cap. 18. p. 208.) (Crell. Respon. ad Grot. cap. 8.) because of the resemblance there is between redeeming a man out of captivity and this redemption. They allow the manner of their redemption and that of Christ to be different, but they say they are the same in substance; and that they both agree in being figure and allusion. And for this reason the word redemption, says Crellius, *aliis etiam rebus quam morti Christi tribuatur, idq; magis quam morti Christi, aut propius.* (Crell. Resp. ad Grot. cap. 8.) and the inference he makes is, that it is spoke of his death after the same figurative manner. As to the words purchase, and price, they allow the sufferings of Christ to be literally and truly a price in all respects but one, and



SERM. and that is, that there is no one who accepts it,

III. *Nibil est in emptione et redemptione propriè dictâ cui in emptione aut redemptione nostrâ aliquid aptè non respondeat, eo solo excepto, quod hic nemo sit qui pretium pro nobis impensum acceperit; seu cui id præstitum solutumq; fuerit; id quod pretii hujus improprietatem arguit.* (Crell. Resp. ad Grot. cap. 8. p. 180.) therefore we are redeemed *tanquam pretio*, says Socinus, *non quia alicui Sanguis ejus solutus fuerit, sed quia sicut pretium causa liberationis e captivitate est, sic Christi mors in spem vitæ æternæ nos erigendi, resurrectione consecutâ, causa fuit.* (De Servat. par. 2. cap. 2.) and again, *Eâ siquidem ratione potissimum non vera sed metaphorica redemptio liberatio nostra est, quoniam in eâ nemo est qui pretium accipiat. Si enim id quod in ipsâ pretii loco est acceptum, ab eo scilicet qui captivum hominem detinebat, fuisset; jam non metaphoricum sed verum pretium intervenisset.* (Socin. de Servat. par. 2 cap. 2.) this is what they all fly to, and urge at every turn; and this is the very pinch of the nicety that hath troubled the christian world for so many years past. Because there is no body to accept this, therefore it must be only a figurative and metaphorical price; if it were accepted by any one, then it would be no figurative but a true and real price. But the real truth is, that both these assertions are false and groundless. For it is not now a metaphorical price for the reason they give; nor if that reason were removed would it be a proper one; as I hope will



will sufficiently appear when it is known SERM.  
wherein the true analogy consists, which I III.  
am next to enquire into. 

In order to which we are to consider well, that the redemption of man by the passion and blood of Christ is a profound mystery; it is so much a mystery, that it is the foundation of all the other mysteries of the gospel, which are but so many branches of it. *It is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which had they known they had not crucified the Lord of glory.* 1 Cor. 2. 7, 8. Eph. 1. 7. The Apostle speaking of the Redemption we have through the blood of Christ calls it afterwards *the mystery of his will*. In short it is that great mystery of faith spoke of 1 Tim. 3. 9.

If it be here objected that this was once a mystery, but is now revealed; and that those texts of scripture speak of it as such, and is therefore no longer a mystery, I refer them to the answer to Christianity not mysterious, where I hope they will meet with full satisfaction in this point, in the mean time they may take this for that mystery of Christ, as the Apostle calls it, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. They are treasures yet hidden as to the real substance, and true manner of them; though they are revealed as to their existence, and the relation they have to us.

Now if we consider our redemption by the blood of Christ as it really is in itself a mystery,  
there

SERM. there are two things to be considered in  
 III. it, as in the other mysteries of christianity;  
 the one is the real substance and true manner of it as it is in itself; and the other is those analogous objects which the spirit of God hath made use of to represent them to our understanding. As to the first we have not the least idea of it, we have no words to express it, nor are we capable of forming the least conceptions of it. We know as little of it as we do of the real true nature of God, or of Christ as he is in glory. We are utterly ignorant what a violation of God's nature and attributes is, and how they are to be preserved inviolable. We know not how God is angry, or how he is appeased; nor what proportion the sufferings of Christ bore either to the justice of God, or the sins of men. We are utterly ignorant how the blood of Christ operates in respect of God, and after what manner it works a reconciliation. These and every thing else relating to the true nature of this mystery as it is in itself, is as far out of our sight as the highest heavens; and if we were rapt up thither as St. Paul was, we should be as little able to express it as he was. We must find some other way of thinking for this, than by a labour of the brain; and some other kind of conversation than those distinctions of sounds from the beating of the air, by the motion of our tongue and lips.

This wonderful unfathomable mystery hath the spirit of God revealed to us in such language,

guage, and by the intervention of such objects, SERM.  
as we were capable of, and which bear the III.

nearest proportion and analogy with it of any thing that comes within the compass of our senses and our reason. The whole mystery of our salvation transacted between God and Christ is, by the holy spirit, revealed to us under the resemblance of those transactions which pass among ourselves; and those dealings that are common between man and man. Alas! there was no other way for us to come to any knowledge of them but this; therefore our state of sin and corruption is called a captivity, we are said to be slaves, and the blood of Christ our ransom, and we are said to be redeemed, though it be in strict propriety neither captivity nor ransom. Our sins are considered as a debt due to God, and the death of Christ as the discharge of the debt; and yet there is no bond cancelled, or release given. Again, we are represented as slaves that are purchased, and his blood is called the price; and yet nothing is properly either bought or sold: Moreover, God is represented as angry and incensed at us, and as appeased and reconciled by the blood of Christ; and yet in truth he is neither angry nor appeased.

The Socinians say, Christ doth not reconcile God to us, but us to him; this would be prettily said if we were every where in Scripture represented as being angry with God, and not he with us; then indeed it would be a very proper



SERM. proper reconciliation, for we can be both angry and appeased. Now the church hath expressed all this by the word satisfaction, because God is every where in scripture represented as just, and punishment the due reward of our sins ; and it is a word very significant and expressive of this great mystery. Not that it gives us the least glimpse of the true nature and real manner of the thing, but because the satisfaction that is made from one man to another for any offence against him, is the liveliest and most exact analogy the mind of man is capable of in this great revelation, and nothing else will express it so well. And yet if at the same time we go about to form a conception of that satisfaction made by the blood of Christ, from the satisfaction that is made from one man to another, either by punishment or otherwise, we think as absurdly as when we attribute to him the passions and members of a human body ; nay we may as well imagine what sort of price it is, and the true manner of his buying us from the payment of a mighty sum of money. Thus as God himself appeared in human shape to become the object of our sight, he at the same time brought down this mysterious work of our redemption to the level of our understandings ; that what could be neither seen nor heard, might be let in by our eyes and ears ; and what could not enter into the heart of man to conceive, might find a way to our understandings by the feigned colours of our imagina-



imagination. And yet the utmost of our SERM. knowledge of them is still as improper as that III. of his divinity when we behold the form and similitude of a man. This is a goodness and a wisdom we are to contemplate and adore, and not to cavil at. However, this grace and condescension of the spirit hath been turned into wantonness, inasmuch, that instead of the consideration and belief of the main design and import of what he spoke, men set their heads at work to play upon his words, and persuade the world that he can mean no such thing as he speaks.

This is the true figure contained in those expressions of the holy scriptures which speak of the redemption of man by the blood of Christ. This is the true analogy or similitude by which this mystery is brought down to our conceptions, and by means of which it is made a proper object of our reason. As to the other part of it, it is the object only of our faith, we cannot have the least idea of it. When we come to have a direct view of the divine nature, and see God *as he is*, then, and not till then, we shall know what price, or purchase, or satisfaction is in respect of him. This is one of *the deep things of God*, the Apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11. which none can know but the *spirit of God*; as none can know *the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him*. On which text Crellius observes that the comparison here is between the thoughts of a man before they  
are

SERM. are told, and the things of God before they  
 III. are revealed. And then adds, *Quid vero hoc*  
 { *ad Christi mortem, et ejus vim? præsertim post-*  
*quam de eâ moniti sumus: mors enim Christi*  
*ejusq; in salutis nostræ negotio vis, non est ali-*  
*quid in Deo latens; sed testimonium potius ap-*  
*ertum rerum in ipso per se latentium.* (Resp.  
 ad Grot. cap. 8.) And upon the same principle  
 Socinus argues that it was the design of the  
 holy scripture, *ut quiddam apertum ante oculos*  
*ponat, non autem ut occultam quandam indicet*  
*virtutem.* The ground they go upon is this,  
 that though the death of Christ with the de-  
 sign and effects of it were mysterious before  
 they were revealed, yet they cease to be a  
 mystery now they are so. Not considering  
 that there is as great a difference between the  
 things of God and the things of a man after,  
 as well as before they are revealed. It is true,  
 before they are revealed they are both equal-  
 ly unknown; but it doth not follow at all  
 from thence, that therefore when they are  
 revealed they are both equally known. Now  
 the falsity of the consequence is glaring and  
 evident, and you see plainly what was the fal-  
 lacy that deceived them. The things of a  
 man when they are told are as fully known,  
 and perfectly comprehended as they were by  
 the person in whose breast they lay concealed.  
 But the things of God after they are revealed,  
 do not cease to be mysterious still; as this in  
 particular of the virtue and satisfaction of  
 Christ's death, the true manner and substance  
 of

of which is something still latent in the mind of God ; and is revealed to us after the manner of men, by such words and conceptions as were most suitable to our present infant imperfect state. SERM.  
III.

If it be asked how do we know that the expressions of Scripture concerning the death and sufferings of Christ do import something real in respect of God, some hidden virtue and efficacy answerable to satisfaction and price among men? Let us ask them how do they know that they import no such thing? The answer we are to give is obvious and natural, that the spirit of God hath spoke of this doctrine as if it were so; it is revealed to us in such expressions as do import thus much, and on supposition it were really so, it could be revealed to us no otherwise; and therefore we are plainly under this dilemma, either of believing it to be so, or utterly rejecting the revelation; they either are to be taken in that sense, or they signify nothing at all. The holy scriptures represent this mystery to us as such, and therefore we acquiesce and believe it. But they can never make any answer to us but what must proceed from a presumption of such knowledge into the secret councils of God, and into the divine nature and attributes as is utterly impossible in the frail condition we are now in. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* so as to determine boldly that there is nothing in the secret



S E R M. councils of God, besides a plain decree, that  
 III. made the death of Christ necessary to the salvation of man? Who can say that there is nothing in the justice of God or any of his attributes, or in his whole nature that requires something answerable to what we call a price or satisfaction among men in order to our pardon and reconciliation? Who can describe the manner of this mysterious reconciliation, so as to decide it to a point that it cannot be this way, or that way, or another way; but exactly define how it is that God may, or may not be wrought upon.

Thus we are come to the positive part of the question, and all the controversy that remains can in truth be no other than this, namely, whether our redemption by the blood of Christ be revealed to us in Scripture in such expressions as do import a literal and proper satisfaction among men, in the strictest sense of the word? For if this appear there can be no dispute as to the other part of this mystery, (i. e.) whether any thing correspondent and answerable to this be designed and intended in the revelation between God and Christ as true and real as what we conceive by satisfaction between man and man. Now this can never be disproved, and therefore to presume the contrary is no other than to deny the revelation, in which we are to acquiesce and believe what we have no capacities to understand,

Now



Now nothing can be plainer than that the revelation is made in such terms, and it is what the Socinians themselves do not deny; not considering that by allowing this they give up the cause, and grant all that we contend for; namely all that can be understood of this mystery: And all that is possible for them to do beyond this is, to dispute very learnedly and acutely about what they do not understand; and to raise many difficulties never to be solved, and at last come to a nice determination of the exact manner of what neither they nor we have the least idea of. And now that we can place those texts of scripture relating to this controversy in their true light, let us take a view of them, and see whether the Socinians do not evade them only by saying as we do, and think they have carried their point by making the greatest concessions that can be desired of them.

The first text I shall mention is that of Math. xx. 28, where it is said that *the son of man came to give his life a ransom for many*; the original word is λύτρον, a price of redemption; the same word is used in other places of scripture. What a price of redemption is, every body knows; it is a quantity of money, or jewels, or whatever else is precious that is given to purchase the freedom of any person in the custody or power of another. The redemption of man by the blood of Christ, and the manner of it, is revealed to us by this word and conception;

SERM. and the thought that it naturally raises in the  
 III. mind of a person that hears it is this, that  
 as a gift or price of redemption hath a virtue and power in it of prevailing among men for the freedom of others; so the blood of Christ hath a real value and virtue in it for the redemption of the souls of men (i. e.) it is in respect of God and the souls of men, what a ransom is among us. This is plainly what is spoke, and all that is intended by the spirit of God in that expression. Why are not people satisfied with this? why, because that divine ransom is not exactly in all things parallel to a human ransom: (this is the whole scope of the Socinians arguing) *ergo* it shall be no ransom at all. Mortal man! God never designed that the mysteries revealed in the gospel should run parallel in every instance with those analogous objects by which they are revealed to us; no, but that they should be parallel in that particular instance that is expressly mentioned, and therefore designed: So here they are strictly parallel in this, that as there is a real value in one, so there is in the other. And it is a strange consequence this, that because they are not strictly parallel in every instance, therefore they shall be parallel in none; no not in that particular instance that is given and insisted upon. We ought not to put the dispute on this foot, nor labour to shew what cannot be proved, and what there is no necessity for if it could;  
 for

for when it is put to this issue they will have great advantages against us. SERM.  
III.

But let us see how they evade this and other texts to the same purpose; (Wolzogen. in loc.) *sumitur hæc vox λύτρον*, says Wolzogen. *in totâ sacrâ scripturâ semper metaphoricè*. And after taking much pains to shew this, says, *jam verò causa nulla est, cum vox redemptionis tam sæpe imo ferme semper in sacris literis metaphoricè accipiatur pro quâvis liberatione, cur non etiam vox lytri, hoc loco apud Matthæum, in eâdem metaphoricâ significatione accipi debeat?* So that you see his conclusion is nothing to the purpose, for we grant the word is not to be taken properly; and therefore they are all to begin again. The places commonly instanced in are those which speak of God and Moses's redeeming of us, why are those metaphorical? because they did not redeem us with giving a price; if they had given a price it would have been a proper redemption. But the true difference between their redemption and that of Christ's is not, that in one there was a proper and literal price given, and in the other not: If in either of them there had been a proper price it would have been a proper redemption. But the true difference is, that in the redemption by God and Moses there was no price given, either proper or analogical; they neither payed a proper price, nor any thing answerable to it; nothing was said to be given, no ransom



SERM.

III.

was actually payed, nor any thing signified or represented by a ransom. But the manner of Christ's redemption is exactly expressed to us to be by a ransom, and that ransom was his life. Where is it said that God or Moses ever redeemed us by giving themselves a price of redemption for all men? If they will argue from parallel places, let them take the words together, otherwise they conclude nothing: For this of theirs is a strange sort of inference, the word redemption is found in some places of scripture without mention of a price, therefore it shall have the same importance where there is express mention of a price with it, and where we are told very particularly what that price is. Wolz: concludes his comment upon this text, under which he speaks to all of the same kind, with these words; *Quare mors Christi nullam vim habet Deo solutionem aliquam pro peccatis præstandi, sed vim habuit nobis remissionem peccatorum conciliandi.* He concludes well; if he means a payment in the same sense with our payments to one another, he is in the right, for it was not such a payment as that of a sum of money where it is due; but as the payment of that money had a virtue in it to discharge the creditor from any farther obligation, so there is a *vis*, as he says, an unconceivable but real power and efficacy in the death of Christ to free us from the guilt of our sins: Thus they conclude against us, only  
by



by saying as we do. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. Mark SERM.  
IV.  
x. 4, 5.

Again it is said, 1 Corin. vi. 20. Ye are bought with a price, *ἡγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῇς*. both the words of the original are as full and expressive of bargain and sale as possible. These two words says Slichtingius (*in locum*) make up one full metaphor: And afterwards says *Quod utrumq; per metaphoram ac similitudinem dicitur, nam nemo nos Deo vendidit; et vita et sanguis filii Dei propriè loquendo pretium non est. Very true, it is not a proper price; sed superat et excedit omne pretium. Very true again, and mighty well expressed; what could we say more? It is infinitely beyond all price, and is of infinitely greater efficacy than any thing we can imagine: And this is the very reason why this mysterious virtue and incomprehensible value is revealed to us, under the faint and weak resemblance of a price; though at the same time, as he says, this blood and life of Christ is *nullo pretio estimabilis*. (1 Corin. vii. 23.)*

Another place I shall mention is, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. where we are said not to be *redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*. The reason of the opposition here is to magnify the value and worth of the blood of Christ beyond silver and gold, which are the things of greatest value among men; and to shew us that the price paid for us is not of the nature of a price

SERM. price among men, but precious beyond any  
 III. value that we are able to compute or imagine;  
 And it is a strange inference of theirs from  
 hence, because that it is infinitely more worth  
 and of greater value, that therefore it hath  
 no real value or intrinsic worth at all, but a  
 purely metaphorical and imaginary one.

This comparison and import of the text  
 the Socinians own; insomuch that Slichtingius  
*(in locum)* makes this observation; if any man,  
 says he, parts with his silver or his gold for  
 the redeeming of another, he lays an eternal  
 obligation on him. *Quanto magis si rem im-*  
*pendat omni argento pretiosiore?* Can any  
 thing be more plainly intended here, than  
 that, though you were not in a proper sense  
 redeemed with silver and gold, yet you are  
 redeemed by the payment of a price of in-  
 finitely greater value, which in respect of God  
 is a price, as silver and gold is among men:  
 And you are to apprehend and understand it  
 as such, because you have no other way of  
 conceiving this great mystery of your redemp-  
 tion in this life.

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## S E R M O N IV.

The true christian Doctrine of the  
Satisfaction of Christ vindicated.

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A C T S xx. 28.

*To feed the Church of God, which he hath  
purchased with his own blood.*

**T**H E whole verse runs thus, *Take heed* SERM.  
*therefore unto yourselves, and to all the* IV.  
*flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made*  
*you overseers, &c.* In a former discourse upon  
these words, after I had shewn how they were  
a manifest proof both of the divinity and sa-  
tisfaction of the Son, I proceeded to a more  
particular consideration of the latter, in the  
same method I had done in some other  
branches of this controversy with the Soci-  
nians; by laying down their opinion in this  
matter from their most celebrated writers;  
and then coming to a right state of the ques-  
tion, which I think I have shewn they have  
mistaken; and that for that reason all their  
arguments either conclude nothing at all, or  
else infer nothing more than what we allow.  
I shall now proceed to the farther conside-  
ration



SERM. ration of that great argument of theirs, upon  
 IV. which their whole cause depends; namely;  
 { that redeeming is spoke of Christ in the new  
 testament, by the same figure that it is spoke  
 of God, and of Moses, and of Joshua in the  
 old; it is metaphorical in the one, therefore  
 it is so in the other. But why is the word  
 redeeming metaphor when spoke of Christ?  
 because he redeemed us without paying of a  
 price. The word λυτρόω is from λυτρόν a price  
 of redemption, it signifies to redeem with a  
 price; and therefore when it is used of any  
 redemption without it, it is figure only. But  
 what a gross mistake this is of the original  
 words of the old text; which are used of  
 God, and Moses, and Joshua, which have  
 not the least foundation for this reason of the  
 metaphor. The words used of them are  
*kapher* כפר which is an original word of itself,  
 and among other significations hath this of re-  
 deemng or delivering in the general; and  
 from hence *kapher* כפר comes to signify a price  
 of redemption: And so it is with the word  
*gaal* גאל *redemit*, from whence the participle  
*goel* גואל is used for a redeemer or deliverer.  
 The word *seban* שבנ indeed signifies to buy or  
 redeem with a price; but it is a Chaldee word,  
 and not used, that I can find, but in those  
 few parts of the old testament written in  
 the Chaldee dialect. These I say are words  
 used in their first signification to express  
 saving, redeemng, delivering, either by a  
 price or otherwise; and do not import any  
 thing



thing of a price, more than they do of any other means used to work the deliverance of men: So then the metaphor is lost, and there-  
SERM.  
IV.

fore all that they have said upon this head falls to the ground. However to put the matter beyond all controversy, we will let this go with them; for the 70 do translate these words by *λυτρόω* which doth import redeeming by a price; and the same word is continued in the new testament, and is a figurative expression in both; and yet Crellius's consequence doth not follow (Crell. resp. cap. 8. p. 173.) *Neceſſe eſt ut etiam concedas quemadmodum nullum pretium Moſes Deo ſolvit, nec ei ullo pacto ſatiſfecit; ita nec Chriſtum id ſe- ciſſe.* And what he ſays a little after, making a comparison between Moſes and Chriſt, that they agree in this, *quòd neuter Deo verè ſatiſfecerit, neuter verum pretium ſolverit.* By the words *verè*, and *verum*, they mean a proper and literal ſatisfaction and price, which we do not contend for; but as I ſaid before do allow there is a figure in it. Now becauſe this is the very pinch of the difficulty, and the ground of that miſtake which runs through the whole Socinian controverſy, I muſt diſtinguiſh here a little more nicely: And becauſe there is ſuch frequent mention made in them of metaphor and analogy; to make all that is ſaid in this controverſy, more clear; it will be neceſſary once for all, to ſpeak ſomething concerning the nature of them; that people may apprehend diſtinctly what we mean when we uſe the words

SERM. so frequently; and 1st, a metaphor is the

IV. change of a word from its first or proper signification, to some other. This change is occasioned either from some likeness in that other thing, as a crafty man is called a fox, and this is pure metaphor and no analogy; or it is from some equality or proportion it bears to the first thing signified. In this there are always four terms to be considered, as the first is to the second, so the third is to the fourth; viz. as the head is to the body, so a Prince is to the commonwealth. The word head applied to a prince is said to be metaphorical, but it is in truth analogy.

2dly. Analogy is defined by Aristotle *ισότης τῶν λόγων* (Eth. 5.) an equality or proportion of reason, a *similis ratio*, by which he plainly distinguishes it from metaphor, though his commentators have confounded them. This is likewise two-fold, the first doth not at all differ from the last sort of metaphor, which is most properly analogy.

The other is when the same word is attributed to two things equally, when it is proper to them both, and figurative of neither. As the word *principle* in respect of the heart of man, and the foundation or chief support of an house. There is a *ratio similis* in the things, and it would be the former analogy if we knew which of the things it is first and chiefly applied to.

The first of these is pure metaphor, the last is only analogy, but of very little use;  
the

the two middlemost are the same, and are called promiscuously sometimes one and sometimes the other; it is either a metaphorical analogy, as Cajetan calls it, or an analogical metaphor. *Et hujus, modi, says he, analogiâ Sacra Scriptura plena est, de Deo metaphoricè notitiam tradens.* (Cajet. lib. de analogiâ.) And I may add not only of God, but of all things relating to him, and to another world. Now, though these divine things are spoke of in this figurative manner, yet no one doubts but that they import something as true and real as those things which are expressed in terms strictly literal and proper; there could be no proper words for what we have no immediate or proper conceptions. If we conceive celestial glory by light, we must express it so; and if we have no conception of God and his attributes, we must discourse of him in the language of men, and speak and think of him as we do of one another.

It may be said that the foundation of analogy is similitude or proportion, but there is no similitude or proportion between the things of another world and of this, and therefore no analogy; that there is no real similitude I grant, and all that can be inferred from this is, that the things of another world are not spoke of in pure metaphor. But there is a proportion or parity of reason, a *similis ratio*, or ἰσότης τῷ λόγῳ, which is visible in the instance I am now upon. As man is prevailed upon with a ransom, so God is prevailed upon by



SERM. by the blood of Christ. There is no similitude or strict proportion in this, but there is a parity of reason.

IV.

And we shall less wonder that the things of another world are represented to us by such objects as have no similitude with them, when we consider how little similitude there is between those objects that are signified by the same word in a proper and metaphorical sense. Let us take that very instance of analogy given by Aristotle (2. de animâ) αἱ δὲ ριζαὶ τῷ στόματι ἀναλογον, ἀμφω γὰρ ἔλκει τὴν τροφήν. Pray, what likeness or proportion is there between the root of a vegetable and the mouth of an animal? And yet they are analogous because both kinds receive nourishment that way. In many other instances there is a much greater disproportion and want of similitude; and yet when any thing is ever expressed by metaphor and analogy, there is not the least suspicion in the mind that it is the less real and substantial because it is expressed by a figure. These figurative expressions pass current in common speech, and no man calls in question the truth and reality of what is signified by them, but takes it for granted there is as much of truth and reality in the metaphor as in the first propriety.

Having premised this, we may put the whole matter in a light yet more clear, if we consider that the word redeeming when it is applied to Moses and Joshua contains in it a pure metaphor and no true analogy; it is meta-



metaphorical for the reason the Socinians give, because he redeemed the children of Israel without a gift, or price of redemption. And there is the same figure in the word whenever it is used to express redemption performed by any other means, or after any other manner than that of a price: Whatever the means are that are used there is a liberty gained, and a freedom at the bottom which gives them all some resemblance and likeness of one another. And they may be all expressed by the same word, though in it's first and strict propriety it is applied to the redemption that is performed by a price. But it is no strict analogy, because the foundation of it is not a parity or proportion of reason; and much less is it that analogy in the resolution of which there is one term unknown; as if we should resolve it the best we can, and say, that as man redeems with a price, so Moses and Joshua redeemed by force; all these terms are known.

Again, when God is said to redeem a people, there is both metaphor and analogy in it. There is metaphor, because he performs it without a price. And there is analogy in it, because in the resolution there is a parity of reason, and one term unknown. As for instance, as among men people are redeemed with a price, so in scripture they are said to be redeemed by the high hand or power of God. This last term is altogether unknown, for we know not what that is in  
God

SERM. God which we express by a right hand, or  
 VI. the strength and power of a man.

But lastly, when Christ is said to redeem us there is pure analogy, and no metaphor; for the metaphor implied in the word redeeming quite ceases, when there is express mention made of a price. Redeeming is then used in the strictest and first propriety of the word, and whatever figure there is, is not in the word redeeming but in the word price, that is not only implied in it when it is spoke of Christ, but expressly named and joined with it. It is the word price that limits the word redeeming, that fixes and determines the manner. So that now there can be no question whether the word redeeming be to be taken in a proper sense, but what figure is contained in the word price or ransom; which, as I have been all along shewing, is not pure metaphor, because there is no similitude that we are able to imagine between a price or ransom paid to man, and the blood of Christ to God. But there is a parity of reason, namely, that the virtue of Christ's blood is in respect of God, what a ransom is between man and man. There is as much truth and reality in that, as in this; and as a price hath a real value between man and man, so there is a real value, a true virtue and efficacy in the blood of Christ in respect of God, to prevail with him for our pardon and redemption. When it is said, as in Rev. v. 9. *who hath redeemed us to God by his*

*his blood*; there may be only metaphor in SERM.  
it, because that blood is not said to be a ran- IV.  
som; but when it is said, *ye are bought with*  
*a price*, this can be no metaphor, but ana-  
logy; because both the words express some-  
thing that we are not able to conceive; and  
therefore is represented to us by a price or  
ransom among men: because we are not  
redeemed with corruptible things, such as  
silver and gold, but *with the precious blood of*  
*Christ*, precious in respect of God as silver  
and gold is in respect of us; precious beyond  
all imagination, and therefore the value and  
efficacy of it is very imperfectly represented  
to us under the notion of these worldly  
objects.

This distinction was not weighed by the  
Socinians, and for want of it they ran away  
with this false consequence; the blood of  
Christ is not a proper price, therefore it is  
only metaphor; whereas in truth it is neither;  
the expression is neither strict propriety, nor  
metaphor, but analogy. Not seeing the ground  
of which, they *in terminis* confess the thing  
we contend for to the glory of the truth; and fre-  
quently express it to much advantage. Crellius  
(Resp. ad Grot. Cap. 8. p. 177.) shews how  
Grotius by the word *verè* must signify *proprie*,  
as indeed he did, *alias* (says he) *si verum op-*  
*ponatur falso ac fictitio*; then he concluded  
nothing against Socinus, *nam etiam id quod*  
*figuratè tale est etiam verè tale est*, which is  
the very truth. For though the virtue and



SERM. efficacy of Christ's blood be expressed by a figure, yet it is never the less real and true.

## IV.

Again, he hath this sentence, *Sacræ literæ cum ipsâ redemptionis voce utuntur, ob metaphoræ hujus concinnitatem et locutionis emphasin, nulli alii rei actum hunc expressè tribuunt præterquam morti Christi, quæ impendium continet illi simile, quæ ad redemptionem propriè dictam requiritur.* (Crell. Resp. ad Grot. cap. 8. p. 181.) &c.

The Socinians call it *impendium* and not *pretium*, because it was an expence, say they, but no proper price; they allow it to have a likeness of that expence a man is at in a proper redemption; and in this they are no farther mistaken than that they suppose a similitude where there is none, or at least that we can apprehend; and mistake it for that parity of reason which is the foundation of the analogy.

The same learned Socinian arguing against the strict propriety of the word, which Grotius contended for, says *majus quidem pretium esse potest; vel, ut Petrus loquitur (1. 18. 19.) aliquid pretiosius seu præstantius, sed non magis propriè pretium; nec sanè apud Petrum comparatio est inter aurum argentumque, et inter sanguinem Christi ratione proprietatis pretii, sed ratione magnitudinis seu præstantiæ.* (Crell. resp. ad Grot. cap. 8. p. 178.) Rarely well expressed; it is a pity he did not see the true figure at the bottom of this, he would never have turned it into meer metaphor,



metaphor, but have been an excellent advocate SERM.  
IV.  
for the truth.

Socinus (de Servat. par. 2. cap. 3.) when the objection was raised, why should not the resurrection be called a price in scripture as well as his death, since that is a means of our salvation; *ad istud* (says he) *nullo negotio respondetur; neq; enim ea analogia sive proportio est resurrectionis Christi ad pretium quæ mortis; Christus siquidem resurgendo nihil de suo dat aut impendit—— sed moriendo vitam suam et sanguinem profundit.* Thus you see he answers by a frank concession of the truth; *O si sic omnia dixisset!* Well then, by the antithesis in that saying of his, *Christus moriendo vitam suam et sanguinem dat et impendit*, therefore though it be not strictly and properly a price, yet it is something answerable to it; and agrees with it in this, that it hath in itself a real intrinsick value. All their writings are full of instances of this nature, and any one that is at the pains to read and apply this distinction, will find that the great fundamental error that runs through them is the mistaking this analogy for metaphor. It was a nicety that might naturally mislead men, whose main principle it was, to bring down the mysteries of the gospel to the level of human reason; and think and speak of them after such a manner, as if there was nothing intended or to be considered in them farther than we are able fully to comprehend. It was just in God to give men over to this delusion,

SERM.

IV.

lusion, who had so far quitted and rejected that unfathomable wisdom of his, as to depend thus intirely upon their own. And methinks it is worth observing here, how the same pride and vain affectation of knowledge that occasioned the fall and corruption of our natures, hath misled men in the apprehension of their cure. Our first parents depended entirely on their own senses and their reason; the fruit was fair and to be desired to make one wise; and they did not see the poison that was in it, nor consider the hidden efficacy it had to destroy and corrupt their whole nature. So these men consider nothing in this mysterious work of our redemption farther than what they perfectly apprehend, and can fully account for upon the strength of their own understandings; evading all the divine unconceivable power and efficacy of it, by the same mistake we were first brought into a condition of wanting it. Thus resolving all the power of God into the weakness of man, and confining all the wisdom of God within the scanty limits of human reason, utterly rejecting and renouncing salvation by any other means, or after any other manner than what they perfectly understand; not considering that the mysteries of the gospel, though they will bear the strictest test of reason, yet the mind is not to rest there, but take it's flight upon the wings of faith into the regions of inaccessible light and glory.

And

And thus I think this whole controversy is SERM.  
reduced to these two points, namely, whether IV.  
the true manner of our redemption by the  
blood of Christ and the virtue of it in respect  
of God be mysterious? And 2dly, whether  
there be any contradiction in the revelation?  
As to the first, I do not find that either the  
Socinians or those who answer them, deny the  
true manner of our redemption to be mysterious;  
though the former do insinuate that it is so;  
But now I hope it will lie at their door till they prove it. As to the  
other, it is what the Socinians insist upon,  
and therefore I am now to consider those objections  
they make against this doctrine of the satisfaction;  
and though they are all in effect answered already,  
so that by the help of what hath been said  
no one need be at a loss in discovering the fallacy of their arguments,  
and framing a satisfactory answer to them;  
however, I shall choose out a few of those they insist most upon.

1. That which they insist most of all upon is that there is no one to receive this price, because this price is paid to no one, therefore it is a figurative way of speaking only, and doth not import a real intrinsic worth or value as a price hath. The reason of this objection is plain, for if they should grant that God is the receiver of this ransom, then they could never disown the virtue and efficacy of it with him. But why is not God the receiver? because he was the giver. John 3. 16.



SERM. God so loved the world that he gave his only be-

IV. gotten son. This is the strength of that great  
 { objection in short, and if there had been  
 any one to have received this price, the faith  
 of the gospel in this point of the satisfaction  
 had gone on smoothly and received no distur-  
 bance. Socinus (de Servat. par. 2. cap. 2.)  
 states the case thus by a comparison between  
 a true and literal redemption, and the redemp-  
 tion by Christ. *In verâ liberatione peragendâ*  
*primum captivus requiritur*, and that is man  
 or mankind; *requiritur et is qui eum capti-*  
*vum detineat*, these are sin or the devil or both;  
*requiritur præterea is qui redimat*, this he says  
 is either God or Christ; *requiritur postremò pre-*  
*tium*, this is Christ himself, *seu potius vita ejus*  
*a Deo patre data, et ab ipsomet Christo.* *Neq;*  
*aliud in hac liberatione desideratur ut omninò*  
*veræ liberationi respondeat, nisi ut qui capti-*  
*vum detinebat pretium accipiat.* And the in-  
 ference he makes is that therefore it is not  
*vera sed metaphorica redemptio.* But here he  
 owns that there is a price of redemption or  
 ransom actually paid; that this price is Christ  
 himself, or his blood. Now, for a price to be  
 actually paid, and a ransom actually given,  
 and yet no one to receive it, this is a mon-  
 strous absurdity. The very reason why it is  
 called a price and ransom is because it was re-  
 ceived; and if it had not been received, it  
 would have been called any thing in the  
 world else rather than price and ransom.  
 They cannot say it may be thus in a meta-  
 phorical price, though not in a proper one;  
 for

for that is begging the question, it is saying the same thing over again instead of proving it. For they themselves do allow, that it is not a metaphorical price in any instance but this; and which shews the absurdity yet more gross and palpable is, that unless they allow some one to receive this price, there is no foundation even for a metaphor; it would not be so much as a metaphorical price; nay, it would not be sense; the whole Doctrine would be nonsense all, and contradiction, instead of figure. Let them look to this, it is very good sense and very agreeable to reason as we understand it. So that now the question between us cannot be whether there is any one to receive this price? But who it is that receives it, and to whom it is paid? Not to the devil they own; they all cry out upon this as an impious thought; and very justly condemn St. Ambrose and St. Augustine for this opinion (Socin. de Serv. par. 2. cap. 2. p. 143.) *ergo*, since they can find no one else to receive this price, they had as good even let it be paid to God.

But how can God both give and receive this price? The objection is fallaciously worded, for it is no where said that God the father paid this price for us; whereas it is said of the Son, 1 Timoth. 2. 6. *That he gave himself a ransom for all*; the whole passage is thus, *for there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.* Here he

SERM. is said to give himself in distinction from  
 IV. God the father. And again, he is said to  
 give himself as mediator between God and  
 man; which is expressly assigning the person to whom he gives himself. But on the contrary, there is no mention of God the father's either giving himself, or paying the price; so that if there were no more to be said this objection vanishes, and hath no other force than this, God gave Christ, *ergo* he paid the price. And now the objection is worded fairly the fallacy is visible; for every one sees there is a great difference between God's giving his son, and the son's giving himself. God is said to give his son because in his own eternal council he determined to give up his son (who was of himself willing) to suffer in our stead, and so to expiate the sins of men. And therefore this giving of his son is expressed commonly by the sending his son into the world. As 1 John iv. 14. *The father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world.* The son is said to give himself, because he actually suffered what was necessary to preserve the attributes of God inviolable in the salvation of man; and therefore those sufferings of his are called a price and ransom; and he is expressly said to buy us: And God is said to receive it, because he is pleased with it, and that all was performed which he willed and required; and accordingly it is thus expressed, Gal. i. 4. *Grace be unto you, and peace from God the father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins—according to the will*  
 of



*of God*: So that now it is plain that God SERM.  
gave Christ, and receives him, in very different IV.  
senses; it is granted in the same sense he cannot, then it would be contradiction; in different senses he may, and doth; and that is agreeable to our reason and faith. The fallacy of the objection will appear plain, by seeing what is the force of this arguing in another instance. The sacrifices that were enjoined under the old law were offered to God, and God accepted them; this I hope will not be denied: And yet, how could God accept those sacrifices, when he himself gave them? he gave both the beast that was sacrificed, and the person who offered it; how then can he receive what he himself gave? is not this contradiction, for the same person to be both giver and receiver? See upon what a shameful sophism these men build their faith and all their hopes; and for it pull down and demolish the whole glorious fabrick of the gospel, built upon the foundations of God, and the best reason of man. Christ gave himself to the same person, and in the same sense, that those sacrifices were given, namely, to God; with this difference, that they were the types only, and this the thing typified and represented. If they urge that, according to us, the son is God, and therefore the absurdity remains, that the same person gives and receives it; we answer that Christ is man as well as God; that he paid in his human nature what was accepted in the divinity; and  
therefore

SERM. therefore he doth not give and take in the  
 IV. same sense; which demonstrates there is no  
 contradiction in the Revelation: And therefore, as it is thus far the object of our reason, so what is beyond this is mystery, and the object of our faith; for we know not the true manner of God's giving his son, or receiving his death and passion; we know nothing of the true manner of that agreement between the father and the son, that is represented to us, Heb. x. 7. by a *volume of the book*, or writing of indenture, wherein it was *written* of Christ, *that he should come to do the will of God*, or what he required. The true nature and manner of this divine transaction between the father and the son, this heavenly agreement is represented to us by a writing of indenture, because that is the best notion we can frame of it. See by what shadows and familiar resemblances this profound mystery is described to us; how the spirit of God speaks to us in a human style, and the language of men; because we can know as little of the real true manner of this giving or receiving, as we do of the real agreement or distinction between the persons of the Godhead. If we think of it altogether as of a bargain or sale among men, and fancy that it must needs be exactly parallel in every instance, we think ridiculously, and speak so, when we argue most nicely from one to the other. When men contemplate the tremendous incomprehensible nature of God, and his  
 mysteries,

mysteries, will their heads run upon buying and selling? as if the salvation of man by the blood of Christ must in every circumstance be parallel to a sale at the market-cross; it is parallel in all those things that are essential to transactions of that nature among men; there is one that pays the price, another that accepts it; the price is of intrinsic value with the receiver; and there are persons actually ransomed and redeemed, and yet nothing of this after the manner of men, though there is a parity of reason and such an analogy as is a sufficient foundation for our faith.

Now though the real true nature of this mystery be so much in the dark, yet there are a great number of men, who will venture their salvation upon it, that no expressions of scripture, how plain soever they are to this purpose, can import any real inherent virtue, or intrinsic value or power in the death of Christ with God. What a desperate opinion this is, to run the hazard of damnation, purely upon the strength of reason, in a point that is never to be explained or decided by reason; and in which it is utterly impossible we can have any other foundation for our faith, but revelation? This is the very case of all our refined and acute reasoners against the mysteries of Christianity. Let us see the Socinian, who will prove what he must and ought to do, if he will be so still; not that the scripture expressions, relating to this mystery, are figurative and analogous; but that  
nothing



SERM. nothing true and real is, or can be compre-

IV. hended under this analogy ; that the salvation of man by the blood of Christ is no mystery ; and that we know as much of this mysterious price, as we do of buying and selling an Ox or a Sheep ; or of the redemption of a captive with a sum of money ; If I am not mistaken, the Socinians will find this a harder task than what they have hitherto given us ; namely, to prove that they were all to be understood properly and literally.

2. Another grand objection of theirs is that remission of sin and satisfaction for it, a free pardon of the debt, and yet full payment, are utterly inconsistent ; *nihil magis pugnare potest*, says Socinus, *quam gratuita remissio seu condonatio et satisfactio*. The text of scripture he quotes for this, and which all his followers insist upon is, Rom. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace*. Now if the word *freely* were here spoke with respect to God, or in opposition to a satisfaction, there would be some colour or foundation for an argument : But it falls out so, that neither of them are true ; for first, the word *freely* is not spoke here of God but of man ; it is plain in the original, δικαιέμενοι δωρεάν men being justified freely, (i. e.) without works of their own or any satisfaction paid by themselves, τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, by his grace or condescension in accepting what immediately follows, in opposition to that, *the redemption that is in Jesus Christ* : So that the plain inference from hence is, that though

though this justification be gratuitous in respect of us, yet it is not so in respect of Christ. Now this which is spoke of us have they sophistically applied to God, and so made an inference directly contrary to the import of the place. SERM. IV.

And secondly, the word *freely* is so far from being spoken exclusively of any satisfaction, that the whole scope and context of the Apostle's discourse in this place is to shew the contrary. These words our being *justified freely* are opposed to that opinion the Apostle is confuting, of justification by the works of the law; this in short is the substance of his arguing; all are transgressors of the law and guilty before God, therefore all stand condemned by it; for that reason it is necessary we be justified some other way, which he tells us here is by faith in the blood of Christ; we are justified, not by works, but by that *redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*; which propitiation is to be *ἵνα ἑδείξιν δικαιοσύνης* for a demonstration of the justice of God; as it follows, in the forgiveness *τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων*, of sins that have been actually committed; nay he says again for a demonstration of his justice, and that though he remits the sins of men thus freely, without any works or satisfaction of their own; yet, that he might at the same time be both *just* himself, and a *justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, who hath performed both these for us; who

SERM. who fulfilled the whole law, and is the propitiation for our sins. The Socinians could not, in all scripture, have cited a passage by way of objection more full and conclusive against them; the whole scope of which is, with the greatest strength and clearness, to establish that doctrine they would overthrow.

IV.

But say they, the very notion of remission and satisfaction is contradictory; to which there is a short answer; that to forgive a sin, and yet punish it in the same person, implies a contradiction; but to forgive it to one, and punish it in another is no contradiction, but very good sense; and it is the very doctrine St. Paul maintains in this place. How far this is agreeable to the justice of God, will be considered elsewhere; I am here only concerned to remove the absurdity, and contradiction of it; we allow it to be contradiction in one sense: What they have to do, is to shew it to be an absurd and contradictory expression in the sense that we understand it; or else not to mention this objection any more.



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## S E R M O N V.

The true christian Doctrine of the  
Satisfaction of Christ vindicated.

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ROM. iii. 26.

*That he might be just; and the justifier of him  
which believeth in Jesus.*

**T**HE whole verse runs thus, *To declare, I* SERM. V.  
*say, at this time his righteousness, &c.*  
I have already shewn the context and scope  
of this whole passage in the latter end of my  
last discourse, I shall only observe here, that  
the word *just* is to be taken in the proper and  
natural sense of the word, and not for *meek*  
or *merciful*. Dr. Whitby observes (*in locum*)  
that the word δικαιοσ is used about eighty  
times in the New Testament, and not  
once in the sense of clemency and mercy,  
which hath occasioned a wrong interpreta-  
tion of this place. The only instance Dr.  
Hammond gives to the contrary is, Math. i.  
19. *Joseph being a just man and not willing to  
make her a publick example was minded to put  
her away privily; where, says Dr. Light-*  
foot,

SERM. foot, men torment the word *δίκαιος* to make it  
 V. signify clement and merciful, when it bears  
 clearly the ordinary sense; thus, Joseph, being a just man would not cohabit with an adulteress, and yet being not willing to make her a publick example—— *he was minded to put her away privily.* This being premised the whole passage is clear, and will bear no other sense than what the words plainly express.

The question in this chapter is, whether we are to be justified by the works of the law, or by faith in Christ? Not by works, for ver. 19. 20. *All the world are become guilty before God, and there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.* ver. 23. *For all have sinned and so come short of the glory of God.* The plain import of which expressions is this, that since all men have transgressed the law of God, and become guilty, therefore they are necessarily condemned; there is no way of being justified by the law but by keeping the whole law, which none of the race of Adam hath done, and therefore no man can be saved that way. Why can no man be saved that way? Because he is a sinner and guilty before God. Is not the answer easy upon the Socinian principle? Cannot God forgive those transgressions of the law? Hath not God goodness and power enough to forgive sin? No, they are concluded here as surely and certainly condemned as they are guilty; and there is no possibility of their being justified under that considera-

consideration. How then can he be justified? ver. 24. He is justified freely, (i. e.) without intire obedience, *through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*: Well what is this redemption? It immediately follows, ver. 25. *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*. The blood of Christ is a propitiation or satisfaction for those sins, and we are to be justified by our believing that it was so, and by our dependance upon it. Then follows the reason of this dispensation of God's justifying sinners by the blood of Christ, *εἰς ἔνδειξιν δικαιοσύνης*, for a demonstration of his justice; that in the forgiveness of sin *he might be just himself, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*; believes what of him? What is here affirmed, that he is justified by that propitiation or satisfaction made to the justice of God by shedding of that blood. The sum of all is this, there are but two ways, says the Apostle, of a sinner's being justified; either by a perfect intire obedience, which no man can plead for himself; or by a propitiation, (i. e.) a satisfaction to the justice of God in order to preserve his attributes inviolable; it is for a demonstration of his justice, which without such a propitiation could not be reconciled to a sinner; from whence we see plainly, that the two parts of this sentence are opposed and not consequent the one to the other, as Crellius would have it; (Resp. ad Grot. cap. 1. p. 41.) so that the full sense runs thus, *That he might be just himself,*



SERM. *himself, and yet at the same time a justifier*  
 V. *of him that believes in Jesus.*

From hence I think it is very manifest that there is such a doctrine, as the propitiation or satisfaction made by the blood of Christ, revealed to us in scripture; and the substance of it is not to be denied; we all agree that a propitiation and atonement was made, however men differ about the manner of it. Now from what hath been said upon this point, that tedious and intricate part of this controversy, whether there be an absolute necessity of some atonement or satisfaction to the justice of God for sin? is quite cut off, or at least separated from the doctrine of satisfaction. For how is my faith of this doctrine concerned, whether we are able to determine that question or no? Our belief of it is founded upon the divine revelation, and not upon any clear conceptions we can have of the nature of the thing, or any rational deductions that we are capable of. It is revealed to us, that there hath been such an atonement or propitiation made; why must we disbelieve this? Unless we can search nicely so far into the nature of God, as to see what there is in him that makes it absolutely necessary. Suppose it utterly impossible for the reason of man to demonstrate this question; namely, whether it was made to the justice of God? as in truth it is, because we know not the true nature of God; we are ignorant what justice is in him, and what satisfaction or atonement is in

in respect of him: Shall this any way derogate from the truth of the revelation, or weaken our faith of it? He that was best acquainted with his own nature and attributes hath revealed to us, that such a propitiation or satisfaction was made; in which we are to acquiesce, without examining into what is impossible to solve; namely, how far this was necessary to the nature of God, as he is? of which we are utterly ignorant. Men argue backward when they proceed thus, the nature and attributes of God require an atonement or satisfaction, *ergò*, it was made to something in him; this is arguing from something unknown, to infer something known by revelation. The true way of proceeding is this, it is revealed to us in scripture, that the blood of Christ is a propitiation or atonement, *ergò* the justice of God, (i. e.) something in his nature required it; this is drawing an inference from what is known by revelation, to something that we are not now capable of knowing even by revelation, no more than we are capable of comprehending all that is in the nature of God.

Could they ever have found out by reason, that Christ must have suffered for the salvation of man, and be a propitiation for their sins? much less are they capable of seeing through the reasons of this, and what it is in the nature of God, and the sins of men, that made it necessary: And is it not an odd way of proceeding, because they cannot decide all the

SERM.

V.

niceties relating to this mysterious doctrine, that therefore they will reject the substance, whether the justice of God necessarily requires a satisfaction for sin or no? That there is a satisfaction made for sin must be owned, and from hence the most natural consequence is, that it doth require it: So that, as I said, men argue the wrong way; for it is from the visible things of God, and these that are revealed, we are to make inferences concerning what is not revealed. It is no wonder the doctrine of the satisfaction should totter, when the Socinians have placed it upon a wrong foundation, and its asserters are content to let it remain so; either to stand or fall, as they or we shall get the better, in disputing of what neither of us will be able ever to conclude decisively. The foundation of God is revelation, and it standeth sure and unshaken, while we leave it so; but if we quit this, every wind of doctrine will shake it: This is indeed not to believe unless we can demonstrate, and leave a revelation of God, that our faith of this mystery may stand or fall by the strength of human reason. It is very well when we shew these revelations to be agreeable to the light of nature; but so there is no contradiction, it makes no alteration in them whether we succeed or no.

Indeed where any revelation is not agreeable to the light of nature, so as to be contradictory to the sense and reason of men, this is a good reason why we should reject it.

And



And if this doctrine of an atonement or satisfaction for the sins of men to the justice of God were so, it were not to be received in any part of it, but to be rejected altogether as absurd; but for men to allow the revelation of a propitiation and sacrifice for the sins of men, and then to deny that it was made to the justice of God, is, for ought they will be ever able to prove, to affirm and deny the same thing; for how doth man know but that it is to the justice of God? If there be a propitiation and atonement, as is owned, the most natural thought that arises in the mind of man upon it is, that God is offended with sin, and that he must be some way appeased by a satisfaction for it. This I say is so far from implying any contradiction that it is the first reflection in the mind of man that follows upon the belief of the revelation; and therefore though the belief of this revelation doth not depend upon the decision of this question, yet because it is no small satisfaction to our minds; and a great presumption in favour of this revelation; and an argument of conviction to such as are not heartily persuaded of the truth of it; I shall now enter into the consideration of this point.

It is already sufficiently proved that the price was paid to God, for without its being paid to some one the Revelation is not sense; and by the confession of our adversaries it could be paid to no one else: Nor do we know how to think or speak more aptly,

SERM. than in asserting that it is paid to the justice  
 V. of God, rather than to any other attribute.  
 But at the same time we affirm this, we are  
 to consider that whatsoever is in God is God,  
 and the distinction of attributes in him is with  
 respect to our conceptions; though the distinctions in the divinity made by God himself in the holy scriptures are real, yet all those that we make are imaginary; wherefore it is abundantly enough that it appears this price was paid to God, though we were not able to give a demonstrative decision to which of his attributes it was paid in particular. I observe this to shew the unreasonableness of such men as do perplex our christian faith with abstruse niceties, which we are neither bound to enquire into nor decide: And for us to put the whole controversy to this issue, is in truth no other than to go out of the bright sunshine of revelation, that we might jostle with them in the dark.

They are more perplexed and intricate in this part of the controversy relating to the justice of God, than in any other; and the reason of the confusion they are in I hope will appear plainly, when we have set down their principles upon this head with as much clearness and perspicuity as their way of arguing upon it will bear. They flatly deny that the justice of God did require any propitiation or satisfaction, and that God may and doth forgive sin without respect to any atonement or satisfaction whatsoever. *Nullam ejusmodi in Deo proprietatem, h. e. qualitatem*

*qualitatem in ipso perpetuò residentem esse censemus, quæ Deum ad peccata punienda simpliciter atq; in universum moveat* (Crell. resp. ad Grot. cap. 1. p. 42.) says Crellius. And again, *Esse aliquam in Deo justitiam quæ Deum, etiam ad resipiscentium peccata, si non in iis ipsis, saltem in alio aliquo punienda moveat, id nulla nec ratione nec sacrarum literarum auctoritate probari potest.* *ibid.* and likewise Socinus (de Serv. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 187.) *concludendum igitur est, nullam in Deo justitiam esse quæ omnino peccatum puniri debere dicet.*

Now when we say, the most natural thought which arises in the mind concerning this matter is, that since a propitiation was made, that it was by way of atonement to the justice of God; that it was ever the common sense of mankind that the vengeance of God is due to sin; that it is agreeable to the current stile of scripture, which attributes the punishment of sin to his justice; that this is agreeable to the notion we have of justice among men; that we can imagine no attributes of God so proper as his justice to require this atonement or propitiation; and in short, that we are utterly at a loss how to conceive or speak otherwise of it, &c. then they express their pity and contempt by turns of the shallowness of our understandings, who fancy there is really any such things in God as justice or mercy as we conceive them; and the force of their arguing from this topick is this. If there be really no such justice in God as we



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imagine, there can be no real satisfaction to it; but there is no such justice in God, *ergò*, what we call justice they say is only imaginary, and by way of accommodation. Socinus (de Serv. par. 3. chap. 1. p. 187.) argues from Exod. 34. 6. and Numb. 14. 18. how God is said to be *slow to anger*, and on the contrary, ready to pardon. If mercy and justice were really in God they would admit of no degrees. *Quæ verè in Deo resident nullum terminum habent.* Well, what is the fatal mistake that we and the whole church of Christ have been in till Socinus's time, which is branded with the names of ignorance and madness? *Quæ est etiam inscitia ne dicam amentia existimare Deum, nisi illi plene satisfiat, delictorum nostrorum debita nobis remittere jure non posse.* (Socin. de Servat. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 186.) Why, we have mistaken the justice of God for his rectitude, and his mercy for his goodness. Now, because this is something nice, that we may fully apprehend what they mean by it, and to make what is to be said in answer to them more clear, I shall give a short scheme of their principles concerning the justice of God; the sum of what they enlarge upon in several particulars; and that the rather because few even of themselves do apprehend it distinctly.

They resolve the justice of God into his rectitude, and his mercy into his goodness; and these again they resolve into his will; and lastly, the will of God into his decrees, after this manner.

First,

First, they suppose in God two attributes SERM. V. essential to him and infinite as his nature, namely, his rectitude and his goodness. So that if you ask what it is in God that inclines him to punish sin? They will answer his rectitude. If you ask what it is in God that inclines him to the forgiveness of sin? They will answer his goodness. These two they allow to be properties or qualities, as they express them really in God, and necessary to his nature, and visible in all his works, and particularly in his punishing and forgiving sin.

Again, they suppose God to be infinitely wise, which attribute of his wisdom, in order of our conceiving, they imagine antecedent, and as it were to superintend them. So those attributes of his rectitude and goodness they suppose are exerted indifferently either one way or other at the guidance and direction of his wisdom. Of themselves they incline him to act neither one way nor the other; nor are they to be considered as propensions or inclinations in his nature which lead or determine him any way. For they suppose God in his own nature free and uncontrouled, acting not only void of all restraint from any law without him, but from any disposition or tendencies of his own nature resulting from these attributes, which shall incline him to act either one way or other; all this is as his wisdom directs.

After this, they suppose that God in that infinite wisdom, of his own free grace and motion

SERM. motion did resolve with himself and decree,  
 V. that he would pardon all repenting sinners,  
 and reward them with everlasting felicity;  
 and that he would punish all unrepenting  
 sinners. Which decrees of his he determined  
 to manifest and declare to mankind in and by  
 Christ Jesus; not but that he was of himself  
 considered antecedently to these decrees equally  
 free to pardon or punish all sin; and had a  
 power and right so to do, since the pardon of  
 sin is no other than a receding from his own  
 right; which he might have done in the  
 forgiveness of all sin, if for ends of his wis-  
 dom he had not seen cause to have done  
 otherwise.

Now, pursuant to these decrees, whenso-  
 ever God exerts those general attributes in any  
 particular instances, then we begin to call them  
 by other names, in imitation of that way we  
 have of speaking of ourselves; as for ex-  
 ample, when he exerts that attribute of his  
 rectitude in punishing unrepenting sinners, it  
 is called justice; and again, when pursuant  
 to these decrees made by the direction of his  
 wisdom he exercises his goodness in the par-  
 don of a repenting sinner, then we call it  
 mercy; so that justice and mercy are no ori-  
 ginal attributes, or real distinct properties or  
 qualities in God; but denominations only  
 given to the exercise of his real infinite attri-  
 butes in particular instances; and therefore  
 to say that either of these are infinite they call  
 a gross



a gross absurdity, as absurd as to say that a particular is a general, and so far from being attributes essential to God, that they are nothing real but imaginary.

SERM.  
V.

Lastly, they assert that, since his rectitude doth not prompt or incline God to the punishment of sin (as is observed) any otherwise than as his wisdom directs, therefore that which more immediately and simply moves God to the punishment of sin is his anger or severity, which are not any real properties in God, but the result and effects of his will.

These are nice distinctions and very curious speculations in divinity, which was never intended by it's great author to be so exquisitely refined. But without such labyrinths as these, men could never be led on till they lose themselves. Most of what they say hath some colour, and foundation; and it is the usual policy of the devil to recommend his errors by blending truth and falsehood together; and the more abstracted the truths are, the less discernable is the error, and passeth off with the greater reputation. Wherefore our business is to separate them, that by a more distinct view we may acknowledge the one, and detest the other; and that men might not swallow the rankest poison, because it is wrought up with pleasant and wholesome ingredients. Most of what they say is true, and yet it hath no relation to the false consequence they draw from it, as I  
hope

SERM. hope will sufficiently appear. And it falls  
 V. out that by driving the objection to the utmost  
 they happily strike out the truth. For suppose we allow that justice and mercy, as we ordinarily conceive them, are no original attributes or distinct qualities really existent in God and essential to him, and that we should resolve them as they do into his rectitude and his goodness; there may be good grounds for the doing of this, it will only reduce this controversy nearer to a point and leave them to begin anew.

The justice and mercy of God, when we come to scan them as nicely as they do, are to be spoke of under two very different considerations. One in respect of God himself and his nature, antecedently to any purpose or decree of sending a Saviour into the world; the other with respect to God's purpose and decree of sending a Saviour into the world, and subsequently to the promises and conditions made to mankind in him.

I. As to the first, these are to be considered antecedently to any purpose or decrees of God of sending a Saviour into the world. What they are in God himself, without respect to any of those dispensations that are consequent to any purposes or decrees.

And therefore here we are to look upon the justice of God as one of his real attributes, infinite and essential to him, something in his very nature, part of himself and a perfection incom-

incommunicable to any creature whatsoever. S E R M.  
V.  
And then, with the Socinians, we must resolve this justice, the creature of our own brain made up of the best ideas we have there of right and wrong, into the rectitude of God; a word the best that can be found to express something in him of which we cannot form the least conception. They are not aware that when they name the rectitude of God they express something they know not what; something that cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive. And therefore this is what the scripture every where supposes, and passeth over in silence, as being to us now incomprehensible; and useth the word justice, the word and the thing being most suitable to our present way of speaking and thinking. Besides, the word rectitude is of a large and comprehensive signification; it is no particular attribute, but takes in all the perfections of God; and it is limited and restrained by the word justice; by which means we speak more distinctly and intelligibly of God and his dispensations. And in short, that very thing which they call rectitude, we call justice; and it is to this rectitude or justice that we believe the satisfaction of Christ to have been made, i. e. to something in the nature of God of which we cannot have the least glimpse till we can see God as he is.

And thus likewise it is with the mercy of God under this consideration. His mercy, considered as it is in himself antecedently to any purpose



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purpose of saving mankind by a crucified Saviour, is certainly, as they contend, to be resolved into the general attribute of his goodness. Mercy or forgiveness of sin is a notion consequent to that good purpose or decree of his; and what is conceived in God antecedent to this is all contained in that infinite essential attribute, of which we have no conception, any more than I observed we had of the rectitude of his nature; and we only imagine it to be something in God; an unconceivable perfection in his very nature, which renders him an enemy to all evil, and prompts him to do all the good to his creatures that they are capable of. And therefore when men hope that God will be merciful to them without any atonement to his nature for their sin, they know not what they say; it is all a mistake of this property we attribute to God, a notion of which we form to our selves by that affection of pity we observe in ourselves: not considering that we are attributing to God our own imperfections. For though mercy is the perfection of the Divinity, yet pity is the frailty of human nature; and the ground of their mistake is the thinking of God after the manner of men.

Now this very attribute, which they acknowledge to be real, and infinite, and essential to God, is that very thing which we assert inclined his wisdom to contrive this happy means of our salvation, by an atonement or satisfaction

satisfaction to his nature, and to accept of it: SERM.  
V.

And then, that general attribute of his goodness did exert it self in this particular instance of the forgiveness of sins, which we call mercy. And thus that more general notion is limited and restrained, and so we are enabled to speak more distinctly of this great mystery of our salvation. The reason why this distinction is not made in scripture is, because there is not the least dispensation of God towards men which is not in prospect of that original act of goodness, his purpose of a Saviour; and which hath not a reference and respect to it. Not but that there are texts of scripture which do intimate and imply this, under the name of the love of God, as Rom. 5. 8. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* Could not God while we were yet sinners exert his goodness or love in the forgiveness of those sins? No, the instance of his love is in sending Christ to die for us, while we were in a state of sin, and so of eternal enmity with God. And thus the Apostle's consequence is clear; if God had goodness enough to provide a means of justification for us while we were in a state of sin, and so incapable of forgiveness; how much more inclinable will he be to exert his mercy and love towards us, now we are justified by the blood of Christ? The whole tenour of the  
new

SERM. new testament supposes that, without our re-  
 V. conciliation and justification by Christ, all  
 } men are necessarily enemies to God, and he  
 to them; and consequently in no condition of  
 pardon. And if the goodness and love of  
 God could have exerted it self in the forgive-  
 ness of sin without such propitiation and a-  
 tonement, there is no consequence at all in  
 all those texts which speak of the love of  
 God in sending Christ; since he might have  
 shewn that love to all intents and purposes  
 without it.

2. But secondly, these are to be considered  
 with respect to God's purpose and decree of  
 sending a Saviour into the world, &c. As to the  
 justice of God, if we consider it subsequent-  
 ly to his purpose and design of sending a Sa-  
 viour, and what it is in God after the mak-  
 ing those decrees, it is easy to conceive what  
 we mean when we say God is just. Now we  
 are to consider that the covenant was at first  
 made with all mankind in Christ, and that  
 all the dispensations of God to mankind pre-  
 suppose this decree and purpose of sending  
 a Saviour; insomuch that it is interwoven in  
 the whole style of all his revelations, and  
 there is no divine transaction that hath not a  
 reference to it. For *all the promises of God in  
 him are yea and in him Amen.* 2 Corin. 1. 20.  
 all are made in Christ, and sure and certain  
 in him. Now, we form to our selves a no-  
 tion of God's justice from that justice we ob-  
 serve



serve among men, which is their being true SERM.  
to their word; and dispensing rewards and V.  
punishment strictly according to those rules  
and conditions which are laid down for that  
purpose. This is the most natural conception  
of that attribute of God, it is the most ob-  
vious and intelligible, and for that very reason  
the only notion of the word in the holy  
scriptures; which by the wisdom of God are  
adapted to the capacities of men, are so con-  
trived as to fall in with the plainest reason and  
easiest conceptions of the mind. Agreeable  
to this are those expressions of scripture  
1 John 1. 19. *God is faithful and just to for-  
give us our sins, and to cleanse us from all un-  
righteousness*; because he hath promised to do  
so on such conditions. Again, Acts 17. 31.  
*He hath appointed a day in the which he will  
judge the world in righteousness, by that man  
whom he hath ordained.* i. e. He will judge  
them exactly according to those laws he hath  
prescribed to mankind; and according to those  
threats and promises he hath made to us in  
Christ; and in this sense that saying of the  
Socinians is true, *nullum enim Dei opus a ius-  
titiâ discedere potest; itaq; sive puniat Deus,  
sive pœnas condonet, justè id semper facit.* Be-  
cause he is faithful and true to his promise, and  
acts ever according to those conditions he hath  
proposed to mankind in Christ.

Again, what Crellius says is true of the  
justice of God under this consideration, viz.  
That the justice of God, of which Christ's

SERM. death is a demonstration, is his faithfulness in  
 V. keeping his promises. (Crell. Resp. ad Grot.  
 cap. 1. p. 39.) *Nos justitiæ divinæ nomine, ad  
 cujus demonstrationem mors Christi pertinuisse  
 in sacris literis dicitur, intelligimus primum  
 fidem et constantiam Dei in servandis promissis  
 — Deinde justificationem ab hac ipsius fidelitate  
 in nos proficiscentem ;* which is very true,  
 but it is not all the truth ; and therefore the  
 consequence he makes is absolutely false, that  
 therefore Christ did not die by way of atone-  
 ment to the justice of God in any other sense ;  
 but occasionally only, as God took occasion  
 from thence to manifest his faithfulness in keep-  
 ing his promises, and observing his own decrees.  
 (Crell. resp. ad Grot. cap. 1. p. 40.) *Satis  
 fit mortem Christi èo facere ut justitia illa  
 manifestè patefiat.* And again, *Satis est ut  
 mors Christi pariat insignem materiam et oc-  
 casionem justitiam istam (fidem in servandis pro-  
 missis) demonstrandi.* No, it is not enough,  
 as is plain from the consideration of the  
 justice of God, under the first consideration.

And thus it is with the mercy of God,  
 when we consider it subsequently to his pur-  
 pose of sending a Saviour and proposing con-  
 ditions of salvation in him ; it is no other than  
 his veracity and constancy in pardoning the  
 sins of all those who come within the condi-  
 tions that he hath proposed in him. And we  
 form to our selves some idea of it, by that  
 lenity and pitiful disposition we find in our  
 selves, which inclines us to remit any offence

com-

committed against us upon the submission of SERM.  
the transgressor. This is the notion of V.

mercy in the language of scripture, as Psalm 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*; and all the expressions of grace and mercy in scripture do imply, and pre-suppose the decrees and purpose of God of proposing conditions of salvation to mankind in Christ; which good purpose of God of shewing us grace and mercy, as the Apostle observes, Eph. 1. 4. *was because he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.* This was the import and signification of the mercy seat among the Jews, which was a type of him in whom alone God was merciful to mankind. And that which was proclaimed before the Lord, as most interpreters understand it, Exod. 34. 67. *was in the person of the Angel of the covenant. The Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, &c.* which was a proclamation of that full and free pardon which was to be extended to all men in Christ. From which passages, though I might infer a great deal more, yet I make no other use of them here than to observe the common acceptation of the word mercy in scripture.

Having thus considered the justice and the mercy of God under those very different respects, we come to a clear and easy state of



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the question. For the true point in controversy is not concerning the justice of God in the latter sense of the word, considered subsequently to God's purpose and decrees of sending a Saviour; which is the common acceptance of the word in scripture; and therefore all they have argued hitherto doth not touch the question; but the dispute is concerning the justice of God in the former sense of the word, as it is an attribute of God infinite and essential to him, considered as part of his real nature, antecedently to any of his purposes or decrees, which they not unaptly call rectitude; something in God unconceivable by us now, and will be so till we come to see him as he is. It is hardly to be imagined, till you read their voluminous writings upon this head, how this distinction doth all at once cut off whole tracts, and leaves them to begin anew. For I may say with assurance that, though there are indeed many bold and positive assertions in them, yet there is not one argument that touches the true question. They have laid themselves out in shewing by long harangues that justice in God himself is not what we imagine it, viz. an attribute of his opposed to mercy; nor is this the notion of justice in scripture. But as it is applied to God it signifies his rectitude, *ergo* since there is no such justice really in God as we imagine there can be no such thing as satisfaction to it. Oh, the subtilty of man! When inspired with the poison of the serpent. Well then,

then, since they will have it so, to save them SERM.  
and our selves abundance of labour, we will V.  
lay aside the word justice quite, and hence-  
forward this satisfaction shall be made to the  
rectitude of God, i. e. to something in his  
nature that we can neither conceive nor de-  
scribe. Now they will say, prove that there  
is any thing in the nature of God that neces-  
sarily requires such a satisfaction. No, they  
have been too long our task-masters, and  
laid burdens on us that neither we nor our  
forefathers are able to bear; this is more than  
we are obliged to. We do not put our chris-  
tian faith upon this issue, we have a surer  
foundation for that, namely, revelation, which  
tells us an atonement was actually made, and  
it is most agreeable to our reason to think  
that it was made to something in the nature  
of God that required it. And therefore now  
we must turn it upon them; it is they must  
prove that there is nothing in the whole na-  
ture of God or his attributes that required any  
propitiation or atonement. Therefore, in-  
stead of the former syllogism let their argu-  
ment run thus: If there be nothing in the  
whole nature of God and his attributes that  
requires an atonement or propitiation, then it  
was not made to him or any of his attributes.  
But, *ergo*.

The minor is what we deny, and we shall  
retain the old faith of the church till they  
prove it.

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And now we have consented to lay quite aside the words justice and mercy, I would fain see how many sorts of rectitude, and how many sorts of goodness they will distinguish in God; how acutely they will go about to describe this rectitude so exactly, that it may appear to any man of reason that sin and iniquity is no contradiction to it, but may be very consistent with it, though never punished in any sense whatsoever; and shall give us such a clear prospect of the real frame and composition of the nature of God, that it shall be apparent to us that the goodness of God can admit of sin, and reward and cherish it, which is forgiving it without punishment. I long to see that Socinian that will thus even shew us the father, and then we will believe; but till then we must stick by the antient faith of the church, namely, that this atonement was made to the justice, I beg their pardon, to the rectitude of God, i. e. to something in God that could not be reconciled to sin without it, call it by what name they please. We call it justice, and it hath done very well hitherto; when they find out a more proper form of speaking we will fall in with it, but henceforward I hope we shall have no tedious volumes about words, and whosoever undertakes their cause will speak to the thing, and demonstrate that there is nothing in the nature of God that should make the punishment of  
sin



sin necessary. We will not undertake to **SERM.**  
demonstrate that there is, for this modest **V.**  
reason, because we know nothing of God as  
he is. But since an atonement is actually made,  
which they allow, we from thence make this  
inference, that therefore something though  
we know not what in the nature of God re-  
quired it.

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## S E R M O N VI.

The true christian Doctrine of the  
Satisfaction of Christ vindicated.

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ROM. iii. 26:

*That he might be just; and the justifier of him  
which believeth in Jesus.*

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**T**HE whole verse runs thus, *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, &c.*  
In a former discourse upon this text, I shewed that the full sense of it was to be rendered thus: *That he might be just himself, and yet at the same time a justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;* so that one part of the sentence is not consequent to the other, as the Socinians would have it, but both parts opposed. I proceeded to shew what their opinions and principles were concerning the justice of God, and particularly how they resolved the justice and mercy of God into his rectitude and goodness; pursuant to this I shewed how the goodness and mercy of God were to be considered in two very different respects;

respects; one as they are really in God part S E R M. of his nature, and considered antecedently VI. to any purpose or decree of sending a Saviour; in which sense I allowed that they were attributes of God, infinite and essential to him, and in that sense they are more properly called rectitude and goodness.

Secondly, they were to be considered as consequent to the purpose of God, of sending a Saviour; and in this sense I allowed they were not so properly attributes of God as particular limitations of them, by exerting themselves in the instances of punishing and forgiving of sin; and withal that there was no such things as justice and mercy in God, according to the notion of justice and mercy among us, and those conceptions that we frame of them, any more than there are human passions in him: Upon the strength of this distinction I considered the force of some of their most specious arguments. I come now to consider the rest, together with the weight of their most plausible objections. And now we are come to a true state of the question, we shall clearly apprehend the meaning and import of all their expressions on this head; and at the same time discern how unconclusive and frivolous their arguments and objections are.

And first they distinguish two sorts of justice in God, one which is opposed to mercy; the other to pravity and iniquity, called his rectitude;



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rectitude; which is the very distinction I have made pursuant to theirs, when I considered the justice of God, 1st, antecedently to any promise or decree of sending a Saviour; 2dly, subsequently to such promise and decree. The first is properly called his rectitude, and it is opposed to pravity and iniquity, and not so properly to his mercy: Since, as I have observed, mercy is a notion consequent to his purpose of sending a Saviour; and therefore here we have no difference with them, since the question in debate is concerning the rectitude or justice of God, considered as it is in himself, antecedently to his purpose of sending a Saviour. And we do allow that though the word justice, in common use of scripture, be more immediately meant of the justice of God in the former sense of the word, as it supposes the promise of a Saviour; yet considered in respect of God himself, and applied directly to him (as it may without any such respect) is not opposed to mercy, but to pravity and iniquity: All this we grant, and have no more to say here but this, that the first, though it is not immediately and primarily intended by the word justice in scripture, nor directly opposed to mercy; yet it is the very thing in the nature of God, to which we affirm the propitiation and atonement to have been made: So then, they have sweat and toiled to much purpose in proving what we allow; let them now begin again, and prove there is nothing  
in

in the rectitude or perfection of God's nature SERM.  
 that could require any propitiation or atone- VI.  
 ment to be made to it, in order to the pardon  
 of sin. I am of opinion that when they have  
 said as much over again as they have done,  
 they must after all leave God himself to be  
 the properest judge of it, and rest in the re-  
 velation.

Again, that justice which is opposed to  
 mercy they subdivide; one by which God  
 never fails to punish obstinate unrepenting  
 sinners; the other by which he sometimes  
 punishes even repenting sinners, and might  
 punish them eternally, notwithstanding their  
 repentance, if he had not freely promised to  
 do otherwise. (Socin. de Serv. par. I. cap. I.)

*Dixi duplicem esse Dei justitiam, unam quâ  
 perpetuò utitur, dum scelestos, et contumaces,  
 et perditæ spei homines plectit atque exterminat;  
 alteram quâ peccatores nonnunquam neque  
 contumaces neque omnino desperatos, eorum  
 pœnitentiâ non expectatâ, ex suâ lege punit,  
 vel etiam si velit quanquam resipiscentes, pro-  
 missione misericordiæ suæ quâ se volens nobis  
 quodammodo devinxit exclusâ, punire potest.* We  
 have no controversy with them as to the jus-  
 tice of God in this sense, because both these,  
 in the sense of their distinction, are conse-  
 quent to the decrees of a Saviour. It doth  
 not come up to the question, which is con-  
 cerning the rectitude of God considered ante-  
 cedently to any such purpose; and therefore  
 all they have said upon this is thrown away.

I shall

SERM. I shall only observe here, that without the  
 VI. promise and decree of a Saviour all men had  
 been obstinate and unrepenting sinners; and  
 so according to themselves all would have  
 been punished eternally; and this would have  
 proceeded from that justice of God which  
 they call rectitude, by which he never would  
 have failed to have punished all men; since  
 none of them could have been repenting sin-  
 ners; and then there would have been no oc-  
 casion for this distinction. No man could  
 have repented without the grace and assistance  
 of God's holy spirit, and this had never been  
 afforded if Christ had not been decreed a pro-  
 pitiation and atonement to that very justice  
 of God, by which they themselves do own,  
 he never fails to punish all obstinate unre-  
 penting sinners; so that their distinction is  
 grounded upon this very great mistake, viz.  
 that without the promise of Christ some might  
 have been unrepenting, and others repenting  
 sinners. Observe how this mistake leads So-  
 cinus unwarily to a frank acknowledgment of  
 the truth; (de Serv. par. 1. cap. 1.) *Deum*  
*iniquitatem impunitam non relinquere, hoc qui-*  
*dem verum est, idque perpetuò; si veram iniqui-*  
*tatem, hoc est obstinatum hominis malitiam,*  
*ejusque perseverantiam et perpetuam delecta-*  
*tionem in malis perpetrando intelligis;* this is  
 the very condition of all men considered an-  
 tecedently to a propitiation and atonement;  
 and but for it there would not have been one  
 instance to the contrary in all mankind.

Again,



Again, we now see clearly what they mean SERM.  
VI. by taking all that pains to shew that justice, as it is in God, is not opposed to mercy, but to pravity and iniquity. (Socin. de Serv. par. 1. cap. 1. p. 122.) *cui justitiæ (Rectitudini) non misericordia, sed pravitās et iniquitas opponitur.* Again, *Ea res quæ ad Deum relata misericordiæ opponitur, non justitia appellatur a sacris scriptoribus; sed vel severitas, vel ira, vel indignatio, vel furor, vel vindicta, vel simili alio quopiam nomine nuncupatur.* (Soci. de Serv. par. 1. cap. 1. p. 123.) The scriptures, when they use this word, as it refers to God, never use it in a sense opposed to mercy; but that which is opposed to mercy is either severity, anger, indignation, fury, revenge, or some other such like name. The inference they make is this, since there is no such justice really in God as is opposed to mercy, therefore there is really no propitiation or atonement to it. But this is not against what we assert; we say the propitiation or atonement was made to that justice of God, which they hold to be opposed to pravity and iniquity; to that something really in his nature which they call *rectitude*, at present unconceivable by us, considered in God antecedently both to his justice and his mercy, in the usual acceptation of the words even in scripture; and therefore they are in a mistake when they suppose the word justice in scripture to signify more immediately that original justice or rectitude of God's nature; the  
holy

SERM. VI. holy scriptures, as I have shewn, supposing this, and using it more immediately in a sense consequent to the purpose of a Saviour; though in this the Socinians are right, that as the word is referred to God, to signify what is real and essential to him, it is to be understood as they take it.

Observe here farther the shallowness of this argument; that which is opposed to mercy in scripture, is not justice, but anger, indignation, severity, &c. Pray is not that anger, or indignation, or fury for some cause? and is not this cause either such as deserves them not? and then they would be unjust: Or such as deserves them all? and then they are very just and equal; so that let them give as many instances as they please of this nature, they will be ultimately resolved into the justice of God; and the Socinians after all this round will be only where they set out from us at first. But to comply with them thus far, suppose we should say that this propitiation or atonement was made to the just severity, or just anger, or just indignation, &c. of God against the sins of mankind; for ought I yet see, this will serve the turn as well. Now they are to shew that all this fury, anger, indignation &c. is for no cause or reason; but he is angry because he hath a mind to be so, and he is pleased again when he hath a mind to it, without any reason at all: When you and I would not affirm this of a good man, much less of that infinitely perfect Being, all whose dispen-

dispensations proceed from the unerring rectitude of his nature, and the conduct of infinite wisdom.

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And so likewise when we speak of the justice of God now pursuant to his promise of a Saviour and his covenant made with all mankind in him, all his punishments are agreeable to that original rectitude of his nature, and consequent from it. And when we speak of the mercy of God, all his forgiveness of sin is agreeable to his original goodness, and flows from it; and therefore these words are very aptly used, and understood to express and signify those original attributes. It was utterly needless to have made this distinction; and this matter need never have been canvassed with this nicety, if the ill use men made of it, and the false consequences they drew from it had not made it necessary.

Again, we see the weakness of that argument they insist so very much upon, that for God to pardon sin is in itself nothing more than to recede from his right; and if every one is free to recede from his own right, God may do so in the forgiveness of all sin if he pleases. (Soc. de Serv. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 186.) *Deum ignoscere nihil aliud sit quam de jure suo remittere, unicuique autem de jure suo quantum velit remittere licet.* It is true, it was his right to have punished the sins of all mankind; he might have insisted upon the utmost rigour, and never have decreed to send Christ for an atonement or propitiation to his justice, or rectitude,



SERM. rectitude, or rather to his nature; and yet

VI. have preserved his rectitude and goodness inviolable. But infinite goodness prompted his wisdom to contrive this means of our reconciliation, when pardon of sin was not consistent either with his own nature or ours; and this very goodness we now call mercy, as it exerts it self in this particular act of forgiveness of sin; and it was a stupendous act of condescension, and of receding from his own right to accept of this atonement or propitiation in our behalf; and transfer that punishment necessarily due to sin from us to the person of Christ.

But if they mean this saying of the nature of God in itself considered without any respect to the purpose of a Saviour, then they only assert what they should prove; they say pardon of sin is but a receding from his right, we answer that is more than they know, or will ever be able to prove; it is a bold and positive assertion concerning the real nature of God as he is in himself, of which they have not the least idea or conception; it may be more for ought they know; and if they should be mistaken in what it is impossible for them to be sure of, then they must own they destroy the very life and foundation of all christianity.

So likewise we see through that Sophism of Socinus's, that the divine justice and mercy, as they are opposed to one another, cannot exist perfectly in God at the same time. The inference



ference is, that therefore that justice, which our head runs upon, and does imagine requires a satisfaction, is not really in God. *Omnino hallucinari videntur ii (quamvis in eo commento sibi valdè placeant) qui—— divinam justitiam, quæ misericordiæ opponitur, unà cum ipsâ misericordiâ simul eodem tempore perfectè conjunctam fuisse affirmant.* (de Serv. par. 1. cap 1.) who says they can exist perfectly together; I have already granted that justice and mercy in God, subsequent to the decree of a Saviour, are only particular exercises of those attributes that are essential to him; and therefore in strict and nice propriety of speaking, there are no two such attributes opposed to one another originally in God. But I hope those attributes of his rectitude and his goodness are perfectly joined at the same time in God, from whence flow those dispensations of his, which we call just and merciful, and this is enough for us. And therefore when they affirm the justice and the mercy of God not to be infinite, (Socin. de Serv. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 187.) *Hinc manifestum fit quam graviter errent illi qui Dei hanc tum justitiam, tum misericordiam infinitam esse affirmant.* The inference is, that they are no attributes of God, therefore there can be no satisfaction. But I hope the Rectitude and the goodness of God are infinite, and this serves our turn as well; it is to some unknown perfection in the nature of God, we affirm this propitiation and atonement to have been made, which

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exerts itself in this particular instance of the punishment of sin: We mean the same thing they do, though we call it by another name, which we do allow, considered strictly in itself, and in common speech is of a restrained and narrow signification. But when we apply it immediately to God himself, so as to express one of his real attributes, as we do in this controversy when we speak of a satisfaction, we then extend the word so as to comprehend all that they mean by the word rectitude; nay more, something in the real nature of God unconceivable, to which we hold this propitiation and atonement to have been made.

And thus it is in all their other arguments, the weakness of them is very glaring and apparent by the light of this distinction; and as we read them we shall see plainly that they only serve to distinguish away the question, and triumph in drawing conclusions that make nothing at all against us. I have singled out these few of their arguments because they are the nicest, and what they insist most upon in this head of the controversy; I shall do the same with their objections; those that they lay the greatest stress upon are these.

1. If there were such justice in God as we imagine, no one sin could go unpunished. *Nunquam is (Deus) ne minimum quidem delictum cuiquam condonaret.* (Soci. de Serv. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 187.) Again, *Si in Deo aliqua*  
*proprietas*



*proprietas est, quæ omnino quæcunque hominum delicta sive resipiscientium sive non resipiscientium exacte puniri velit; nunquam is cuiquam vel parcit vel parcere potest. Sequeretur Deum nullum peccatum impunitum relinquere posse.*

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(Crell. resp. ad Grot. cap. 5. p. 124. 6.) Now this which they object as a great absurdity is the very thing that we assert; for if the saying be understood of the original rectitude of God's nature, which is that justice of God about which the question is; it is very true that he leaves no sin unpunished, nor was it consistent with his nature to do otherwise. In this sense it is true that he doth not leave the least sin unpunished; and for that very reason it was, that the sins of all mankind were punished in the person of Christ. But if the saying be meant of the justice of God subsequent to the conditions of pardon in him, it concludes nothing, and nothing is more false, because he actually doth forgive sins; and for that very reason, because there is a propitiation and atonement made to the rectitude of his nature, by the punishment of sin in the person of Christ. I must again take notice here of that deceitful way of proposing the objection, by saying if there be in God such justice as obliges him to punish the sins both of repenting and unrepenting sinners: This is putting upon us what we never assert, and supposing what they ought to prove, viz. that there would have been repenting sinners if Christ had never been pro-

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mised: No, what we say is quite otherwise, namely, that if Christ had not died there would have been no repenting sinners; and that by that original rectitude of God's nature he was inclined to punish all manner of sin, and all degrees of it; and that by his justice now he is obliged to punish only the sins of unrepenting sinners.

2. Another objection they make is, that our notion of the justice and mercy of God implies a contradiction, *contradictione sese involvit*, and that they are destructive of one another; for according to us, one requires that God should forgive all sin, and the other that he should punish all sin. (Raco. Cath. cap. 8. p. 273.) *Eam misericordiam et justitiam, quam adversarii volunt, negamus Deo inesse, cum altera alteram omnino perimat. Altera enim, secundum ipsos, requirit ne Deus ullum peccatum puniat, &c.* If this be applied to the justice and mercy of God, considered subsequently to the promise of a Saviour, the objection holds good; and there is nothing more absurd than to say that his justice requires him to punish all sin, and his mercy to forgive all. Justice and mercy in God in all his dispensations by mankind, pursuant to that eternal purpose of a Saviour, are no other than emanations from those infinite and essential attributes of his rectitude and goodness; they are particular instances, wherein the original perfection and holiness of God's nature do exert themselves; namely, in the punishment

punishment of all those who are not within these conditions of pardon which he hath proposed, and in the forgiveness of all such as do observe them; and therefore this was a subtle and fallacious way of stating the objection. We have no difference with them in this; the question in debate is concerning those attributes of God which they allow to be infinite and essential, and therefore let the absurdity be stated concerning these.

And accordingly if it be said here, that as we conceive the original rectitude of God's nature inclined him to the punishment of all sin, why should we not as well conceive that the original attribute of his goodness should have inclined him to the forgiveness of all sin? Which hath some appearance of a contradiction in the nature of God, that he should at the same time be inclined to punish all sin, and that necessarily; and yet have goodness enough to pardon all sin. This I must confess is a strong objection; and yet perhaps it may not be amiss here humbly to suppose, that it is not a necessary consequence of the goodness of God, that he should be inclined to the forgiveness of all sin, but only that he should be thereby inclined to any method whereby sin should be removed, should be done away; and the formerly guilty object, being thereby become pure and holy, be rendered a proper subject, whereon to exercise that infinite amiable attribute: But here it will better become us to confess, that we are



SERM. at a stand; that this knowledge is too excellent for us; that we cannot attain unto it; VI.  this is above the power of human understanding; and it was for this very purpose that Christ died, to reconcile these attributes to one another, and solve that difficulty which was otherwise insuperable. It was a means worthy the depth of the wisdom of God to find out; it is a depth unfathomable, and therefore here we bow our reason, and acknowledge the mystery, and do not reject the revelation because we cannot comprehend the true and real manner of that nature, whereof we have not the least idea: And at the same time therefore that we own, Psalm 89, 14. *that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, we acknowledge, Psalm 103. *that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting.*

I shall only observe here, that if there had not been something in the nature of God that made the punishment of all sin necessary, there can no reason be given why all manner of sin should not have been forgiven, since they themselves allow, that God hath goodness enough to forgive it all; especially since God declares of himself, that he *will not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather turn from his sin and be saved.* And 1 Tim. ii. 4. it is said, *who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*; from whence we see the great absurdity of the Socinians, who resolve the punishment of all sin into the will of God, when  
he

he hath so solemnly declared that he wills the contrary. For thus they proceed. What makes God merciful to some and not to others? Repentance, and a good life. What makes some repent and not others? The spirit of God, *cujus spiritus in quocumque fuerit, eum pro admirabili Dei benignitate coram ipso justum et inculpatum reddit.* (Socin. de Serv. par. 3. cap. 2. p. 189.) Why doth God give his spirit to some and not to others? Because of his own free will. Now it is time to ask, why did he not will it to all as well as to some? Then the bounty of God would have been more admirable. Why doth he not make all men repent? Nay why doth he not forgive all sin without repentance? Since forgiveness is no other than receding from his right: It is no injury to his nature, and it would be much for the glory of his goodness.

3. Another mighty objection of theirs is this: Our sins is a debt we have contracted with God; man can forgive his debts without any satisfaction; and shall God have less power than man? This they call *insandum sacrilegium* in us, a robbing God of his power. (Socin. de Serv. par. 3. cap. 1. p. 186.) *Quis est qui nesciat delicta nostra debita, sive æs alienum quod cum Deo contraxerimus, in divinis literis appellari; et propterea Deum tanquam Creditorem nostrum, nos autem tanquam ejus debitores peccatorum nostrorum respectu constitui? Atqui nullus est creditor, &c.* And a little before, *quod si quilibet homo jure potest injurias*

SERM. *sibi illatas liberè condonare, non solum id facere*  
 VI. *jure potest, sed etiam ob eam ipsam causam*  
*laudibus ad cælum tollitur: An eo jure et po-*  
*testate Deum privare audebimus?* Now upon  
 the deceitful suppositions they go, namely,  
 that sin in its own nature is the same in re-  
 spect of God, that a debt or an offence is in  
 respect of man; the objection is very good,  
 and as formidable as they imagine it. But as  
 it hath been observed, the expression is figu-  
 rative, and there is in truth and reality as wide  
 a difference between the nature of sin and a  
 debt, as there is between the nature of God,  
 and the nature of man. We know indeed  
 that sin is a breaking of his laws; but how,  
 and after what manner this is injurious to  
 his nature we know not. This we know, that  
 all his laws are so many rules of perfection;  
 they are beams of the divine light, that flow  
 from him as from a fountain; and are in  
 truth so many descriptions of himself: So that  
 by breaking one of them we violate his na-  
 ture, (i. e.) we so far deface his image in our  
 selves, and are so far at a distance from him  
 and from happiness. Sin is called a debt in  
 scripture; because, as a debt or an offence  
 renders us obnoxious to man, and liable to  
 confinement and punishment by human laws;  
 so sin sets us at variance with the nature of  
 God, which is his laws: Not that there is any  
 real likeness in the things themselves, but this  
 is the best analogy by which we are enabled  
 to speak and think of it: Nay the very words  
 remitting



remitting and forgiving sin are figurative ; we know what it is for one man to forgive another and be reconciled to him, and therefore we discourse of God in the same language. But when we apply this to God as he is, and consider what it is actually in him, we know no more what it is for the divine nature to forgive and be reconciled to a sinner, than when we say God *sees* those sins that man hath committed. SERM.  
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If it be said we know what it is for an offender not to be punished, and therefore if man can forbear the punishing an offence against him, and that it is commendable in him so to do ; why should it not be the same in God ? I answer, when a man forgives a wrong or an offence done to him, if it be considered as an injury to the man only, so far he hath power to forgive it ; and it is not only his duty, but it is commendable in him so to do. But if it be considered as an offence against God, the man hath nothing to do with it, he hath not the least power to forgive it : If it be said the same offence may be an injury to both God and man, and as man remits his part, why may not God likewise forgive the other ? This makes the objection clear, and so destroys it ; the reason is short, because man remits only the punishment, and God the guilt of the offence. Forgiveness in man is only passing by the injury and not revenging it, and praying that God

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God would forgive the guilt ; and if injuries were the very same in respect of man, that the guilt of sin is in respect of God, then neither God nor man had power to forgive sin ; and it would be so far from being extolled to the skies in man, that it would be the greatest pravity and imperfection of his nature ; so that the argument must run thus, if man can forgive the *guilt* of an offence committed against him, why may not God do the same ? O but, say they, it is no more than a receding from their right in both. I have already spoke to this ; but suppose here we should grant that it is no more than a receding from their right in each of them ; Is receding from a right the same in God that it is in man ? To recede from a divine right, and a human right are quite different things ; for God to recede from his right is to alter the nature of things, nay, to alter his own nature ; but it is not so in man ; there is nothing in this objection till they shew receding from a right is the very same in both ; and if they please I will put the whole controversy upon this issue.

So that now we see the reason why God cannot forgive sin without a propitiation or satisfaction is not because he hath less power than man, but because he hath more purity and holiness ; and the reason why he only can forgive sin, i. e. the guilt of it, is because he hath more power than man ; and the reason why he only could find out a means of recon-

reconciliation, was because he had more wisdom than man. And thus we see it is no more a robbing him of his power to say that he cannot forgive sin without punishment, than to say that he cannot commit it; we say he cannot be reconciled to a lie or a liar, for the same reason that he cannot tell one. *O infandum sacrilegium!* What, do you rob God of his power? Hath man power to tell a lie, and shall God have less power than he? You see what shameful quibbles are introduced into divinity, and get a reputation in the world; and how the sacrilege is all on their side, who so boldly affirm that the pure and holy nature of God can pass by all manner and degrees of sin without punishment; and reward it equally with the greatest virtues. I think we may now give them back all their own hard words with which they brand our faith of this mystery, and worse if we had them. For this opinion of theirs is plainly not only *inscitia*, but *infandum sacrilegium*; *execrabilis error*; *amentia*, *sententia detestanda*, &c. (Socin. de Servat. par. 3. p. 186.) [all in one page] [these are the men who have been once extolled to the skies for writing with so much temper.] Hard words do sometimes shew a man's zeal, and always his want of temper; but they never convince or persuade; and therefore what they have to do now is in cool blood, to shew that the guilt of sin in respect of God as he is, hath nothing more

in



SERM. in it than a debt or an injury in respect of  
 VI. man; that there is no more mystery in the  
 { forgiveness of sin as it is a real act of the nature of God, than in our remitting a debt; and that receding from a right is the same in God that it is in man.

This is the great arcanum in divinity which they have been labouring at, but have shamefully failed in the performance; and when they imagined they had just attained it, they are as much to begin as ever. Therefore before they enter upon this great undertaking, if I may without offence give them my opinion, I take theirs to be the very case of that man who is not satisfied with the production of gold in the ordinary way of nature, and lays aside all endeavours of raising his fortune by that which is current in the world, to throw away all his time, and thought, and reduce himself to beggary in finding out the philosophers stone; only with this difference, that this man trifles with his fortune, and they with their souls. For thus they utterly reject the plain and common sense of the revelations of God, and that ordinary way of salvation by a propitiation to his justice, to find out a more compendious way of their own; which, for ought they will ever demonstrate, hath as little foundation in grace as the other in nature: And they are both undone by the same vanity, of thinking themselves wiser and more knowing than the rest of mankind.

Though

Though by this time it appears that our faith of this mystery doth not depend upon such nice abstractions as these are, yet as far as our understanding will go in things of this nature, it appears agreeable to the best and most impartial reason of man, that the nature of God could not be reconciled to sin without a propitiation or satisfaction. I have agreed to lay aside the word justice, and if they will do the same with the word rectitude, since it is plain that neither they nor we have any idea of what they signify in God; then the dispute will not be about words, and the question rightly stated will be this; whether there is any thing in the real nature of God as he is, that makes the punishment of all sin necessary, considered antecedently to any purpose or decrees? Call it by what name you please, or by no name; but imagine it what it really is, something of which we cannot form the least conception or idea.

Now the question is thus truly stated, any one may see at first view how impossible it is to argue demonstratively either on one side or the other of the question; especially so as to build all their hopes upon the negative; if we should be in a mistake, and that there is nothing in the real nature of God which necessarily required a propitiation or satisfaction to be made to it in order to his pardon of sin, yet this would no way injure our faith of this mystery; because whether it were absolutely necessary or no, we believe it made to God;

SERM. God ; and therefore preserve our faith of the  
 VI. Revelation. And though there might have  
 been no absolute necessity for it, yet the wisdom of God would have it so for ends best known to his wisdom. But if they should be in a mistake, which is not unlikely in a thing they know nothing of, then it is plain they destroy the great foundation of the christian faith ; they utterly reject the whole power and efficacy of the only means of salvation. Thus they venture their souls upon an impossible performance, by sticking up for a needless nicety concerning which, now we are come up to the point, neither they nor we are able to say one word, unless we will take upon us to decide conclusively concerning that nature of which we have no other knowledge than that he is.

But this is not all, their case is yet more desperate ; for though we should consent to put the whole controversy upon this issue, namely, what meer unassisted reason (for the scriptures are silent here, having discovered nothing to us concerning the real nature of God, but that He is) can determine in this matter, they will have no advantage of us ; nay, it seems so very agreeable to what we know of God and our selves, that there should be something in his nature that makes the punishment of sin necessary, that this seems to be a good reason why revelation is not more particular in this matter.

1. For



I. For first, if we consider the nature of SERM.  
God we conceive him a being of all perfec- VI.  
tion, he is the universal standard of all that is  
right, and holy, and good; and rectitude and  
goodness, like all the rest of his attributes,  
are of his very essence; and he can no more  
do any thing that should violate these than he  
can cease to be. As he is the standard and  
measure, so he is the fountain of all per-  
fection, from whence all rectitude and  
goodness is derived upon his creatures; nor do  
they receive any *moral* imperfection at least  
from him.

Again, all pravity and iniquity, and conse-  
quently all sin is in its own nature directly  
opposed to the nature of God, nay, contra-  
dictory to it; for to say that God should not  
be right and good, is to say that he should  
not be. All this we grant they will say, what  
is this to the purpose? O very much! Pravity  
or iniquity is in its own nature a contra-  
diction to these attributes, whether it be  
considered in himself, or his creatures; so  
so that it amounts to the same degree of ab-  
surdity, to say that God should be reconciled  
to pravity and iniquity in whomsoever it is, as  
to say that he should have any pravity or iniquity  
in himself. Pravity and iniquity wherever they  
are, no matter where, are contradictory to  
the nature of God, and therefore he cannot  
be reconciled to it, and therefore it cannot go  
without punishment.


It

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It is allowed that rectitude, i. e. what we call the eternal justice and equity which is essential to God and infinite, is a real attribute; and if so it must set him at eternal variance with every degree of pravity and iniquity; for God is unchangeable and will ever be the same; nor will pravity and iniquity ever be any thing than what it is to all eternity; and wherever it is the same opposition and contradiction to the nature of God will remain. So that it is as absurd to imagine that this eternal rectitude of God should pass by that which is neither right nor equitable, as if it were both; as to think that a straight line shall agree to a crooked. And therefore forgiving of sin without punishment is a receding from his rectitude; a receding from himself; a changing of his nature, and condescending to be something that he was not before. I know not how they will get over this, who hold that God cannot only forgive sins that are repented of, but might have forgiven all unrepented sin if he had thought fit, before he promised the contrary; this the Socinians overlooked when they made those frank concessions that rectitude and goodness were attributes essential to God, and that pravity and iniquity was opposed to them. Yes, they say well, they are opposed to them, and ever will be so where-soever they are, notwithstanding all the labour they are at to bring them together.

Now,

Now this opposition and contradiction of SERM.  
the very essence of God to sin is in scripture VI.  
expressed by the purity of his nature, and by 

his hatred and aversion to it. I shall name but one text, Habakkuk 1. 12. 13. *Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God my holy one?—thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* O but say the Socinians this text is meant of obstinate unrepented sin, and this aversion is not from the original rectitude of his nature, but from his anger, severity, indignation, &c. which are implied in this text; it is true, and so are all the texts of the Bible which are spoke to the same purpose meant of obstinate unrepented sin; nor is the original attribute his rectitude immediately intended, but the particular limitation and narrower conception of it in his dispensations towards mankind in Christ; which I have shewn to be the import of the word justice in scripture, which does every where suppose that *something* in the nature of God of which we have no notion, which sets him at eternal variance with sin; and pursuant to which all unrepented sin remains as unpardonable, as it would have been if no propitiation had been made. And since all sin would have been obstinate and unrepented but for that atonement, and consequently unpardonable; we may without any force or straining of the words apply all those texts of Scripture which



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~ speak of his justice, anger, fury, indignation, &c. to that original infinite and essential attribute in the nature of God, what ever it is, that makes him unreconcilable to all degrees of sin; which the holy scriptures do every where suppose, and make no direct mention of it, because the thing as it is in it self is unconceivable to us now; and because it was so very obvious to infer that there must be some such thing in the nature of God though we are not able to conceive it.

If it be said that we suppose what we should prove, namely, that all sin would have been unrepented, if Christ had not died, and could not have been otherwise; I own we take it for granted, and deny that it is our business to prove it. All we have to say is, that we can conceive no other way of reconciling God to sin but by a propitiation and atonement to his nature; and this is the way that is revealed to us, and we understand the revelations in the most plain and obvious sense they are capable of. It lies upon them to prove the contrary; it is the great thing they have undertaken; and if they do not give us a demonstration, as clear as any in Euclid, that there might or would have been repented sin if Christ had never died, what will become of them? If they fail in this, their whole scheme of religion doth not only fall to the ground, but they are undone for ever; and we are content to lay the whole matter  
upon

upon this one point, and wait to see what S E R M. success they will have in the undertaking. VI. Certainly our faith of this mystery of a propitiation to God is not concerned in the decision of this point, namely, what could or could not have been if a propitiation had not been decreed; neither they nor we, with all the subtilty we are masters of, will be able to conclude demonstratively either on one side or the other; this belongs to the hidden things of God.

Now, if it be said that though his rectitude might have inclined God to punish sin, yet his goodness might have inclined him to the pardon of sin without an atonement; I have already observed how that mercy, i. e. the exercise of that essential attribute of his goodness in this one particular instance of the forgiveness of sin, is a notion consequent to the decree and purpose of a Saviour; and therefore as we consider goodness in respect of God only, and as part of his nature antecedently to any such decrees, we can frame to our selves no other notion of it than that of communicating being and all due perfection to his creatures; we consider him as an immense and inexhaustible fountain of perfection and happiness, and his goodness to consist only in heaping rewards and favours upon the good; filling the capacities of all his creatures, and supporting the rational intelligent part of the creation in an endless duration of all that happiness. All this I say is prior to any

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thought of sin or transgression ; this crept in afterwards as something quite beside the design and purpose of God in the creation, and is to be considered subsequently to all this; and the original goodness of God cannot be conceived any way as yet concerned in the forgiveness of sin, for there could be no forgiveness before there was transgression; so that guilt, and the forgiveness of it is to be considered subsequently both to the nature of God and the being of his creatures; and we are plainly lost and confounded when we come to imagine how that goodness of God, which in its first and original consideration consisted in heaping blessings and rewards upon the good, should now exert itself in doing the very same upon the wicked. This is so hard a thought proposed thus clearly, that the first hint of it shocks the mind; nor can we think how it could be without some change in the nature of God, and putting the whole frame of the creation out of course. So that the punishment of all sin is easy to apprehend as necessary in God, because it is in its own nature an alienation from him, and a defection from the rules of the creation; but the forgiveness of one sin without punishment could never enter into our thoughts; because the very goodness of God, the only attribute in him which might be a ground of such hope, seriously considered is the greatest argument of despair; since no consequence seems



seems to be more natural than this, God is SERM.  
infinitely good, therefore he can never be re- VI.

conciled to any thing that is evil. If there were any grounds for hope of pardon of sin from the goodness of God without punishment and atonement for it, there can no reason be imagined why that goodness which is infinite, and therefore cannot be exceeded by any degree of sin, should not forgive the sin of the fallen spirits. The Apostle Heb. 2. 16. plainly intimates the reason, *for verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham*; as it is in the verse following, *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*; which could not have been forgiven without it, as this passage plainly supposes.

The Socinians have but one refuge left which they fly to at every turn, and that is by resolving all the dispensations of God ultimately into his will; whether he forgives or punishes, it is not so properly say they from his rectitude or goodness, but from his will. (Socin. de Serv. par. 3. p. 187.) *Ostendi justitiam istam, cui vos satisfaciendum omnino esse contenditis, in Deo non residere; sed effectum esse voluntatis ipsius*; and again he affirms, (ibid.) *misericordiam, quatenus isti justitiæ, hoc est, severitati et vindictæ opponitur, in Deo non residere; sed effectum esse voluntatis ejus*. Nor do they assert that justice and mercy in the notion of them subsequent to the decrees and purpose of a Saviour are only the result of

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his will; but they in effect affirm the same of the rectitude and goodness of God, though at the same time they allow them to be real properties in him, and not only transient affections like the former. (Socin. de Servat. par. 3. p. 186.) Socinus says, that God in the punishing or forgiving of sin is not to be looked upon as a judge, who must determine according to any law, *sed tanquam Dominus et princeps cujus sola voluntas, cum de ipsius jure tantum agatur, omnium rerum lex est et perfectissima norma*. If his will is the only rule and measure of all things, then his rectitude and goodness are positively excluded from being a rule or measure in any thing; and for these to be real properties in God, attributes infinite in his nature, and essential to him; and yet to be no *lex* or *norma* to him, is a greater mystery than any we pretend to maintain; it is not sense, and I think that is all the answer to be given to it; if it be capable of being put into any sense, it is by making these properties the same with his will; and so we may do with all the attributes of God, so that there shall be but one attribute in him, i. e. his will: And by this artifice we shall confound all adversaries; and answer all questions without hesitation. For if any one pretends to start a difficulty, and ask a reason for any thing that God does, he is immediately silenced by saying only that it was his will.

But if it should be said that their meaning is, that the punishment and forgiveness of sin,  
and

and that justice and mercy to which we at-tribute them are only the result of his will ; I will ask only, why forgiveness and punishment of sin should be the effect of God's will, rather than any other actions of God Almighty? Their reason for this is plain, because if they should allow us to think of these after the same manner we do of the other actions of God, we should certainly attribute punishment to his rectitude or original justice, and forgiveness to his goodness or original mercy ; and then the Socinians would find themselves in a noose, and it would appear plainly that they have been all this while disputing about words, and have not so much as touched the true question. And here hath been their fatal error, that instead of resolving the common notion of justice into the original rectitude of God ; and of mercy into the goodness of God, which was natural to do ; they have resolved them both into his will. Well then, since they will have it so, we shall oblige them in this too, and lay aside the words rectitude, and justice, and goodness, and mercy, and it shall be only the will of God that pardons and forgives sin. I hope they allow that when he wills the punishment of one that deserves it, it is a right will ; when he wills the punishment of one who deserves it not, it is a wrong will ; so when he wills the rewarding of goodness it is a right and a good will, when he wills the rewarding of evil, which is all



SERM. their sense of forgiving, it is a wrong will ;  
 VI. so that we are but where we were at first, we  
 have only altered the terms, the thing is the  
 same ; and whether we call it rectitude, or  
 justice, or will, or all of them, or none of  
 them, which inclines God to punish sin, we  
 mean something in him we have no notion  
 of : When we speak so nicely we distinguish  
 we know not what ; the true question is left  
 untouched, namely, whether it be consistent  
 with the perfection of God's nature to *will*  
 the forgiveness of sin without punishment ?  
 Willing of it in God is actually doing of it,  
 so that the question still remains the same,  
 whether God can forgive sin without punish-  
 ment ? and thus, what they fancied a power-  
 ful argument comes to nothing. O but if his  
 will be the only *lex* and *norma* of all things,  
 then he doth not will them because they are  
 right, but they are right because he wills  
 them. O very subtil ! Then on supposition  
 that God should will the telling of a lie this  
 would be a virtue. How would they answer  
 me ? That I make an impossible supposition,  
 for the perfection of his nature is such, that  
 he cannot will any thing that is evil : And  
 thus they come about to us again in spite of  
 their teeth, and acknowledge some other rule  
 or measure of things in God besides his will ;  
 and that though he is controuled by no law  
 without him, yet that his own nature is a  
 law to itself ; and that all this is very con-  
 sistent with the freedom of his will. For it  
 is

is a monstrous sort of freedom they imagine S E R M.  
in God, that he must needs be under con- VI.  
finement and restraint, unless he is in all in-  
stances whatsoever free to both sides of the  
question; and shall have it in his power to  
will good or evil alike with the same in-  
difference.

And it is a strange kind of assurance by  
which men take upon them to determine  
concerning every thing in the real nature of  
God so nicely, as to distinguish his will from  
his rectitude and goodness; and these from  
his justice and mercy; and these again from  
all the rest of his attributes, so as to affirm  
that this, or that property only, or af-  
fection in God, and no other is any way con-  
cerned in this, or that dispensation of his to-  
wards mankind; and in every minute circum-  
stance of it. This is specious trifling with  
the Revelations of God; it is quitting the  
substance for the shadow, and can never  
end in any thing but confusion and error.

2. That there is something in God which  
makes the punishment of all sin necessary,  
call it by what name we please, will appear  
more agreeable to reason, if we consider what  
sin is. God is allowed to be the universal  
standard of good, and the fountain from  
whence all due perfection is derived upon his  
creatures; and all rational beings are in a  
greater or less degree of holiness and felicity  
the more or less they have of his image, and  
likeness. Sin is the defacing of this image, and  
every

SERM. every degree of it is a distorting the original  
 VI. frame of our nature, as it first came out of  
 the hands of God; and therefore more or less  
 doth deprive us of all capacity of virtue and  
 happiness; so that we speak confusedly when  
 we separate the sin and the punishment, and  
 conceive the latter to be only a positive act in  
 God: There is an inseparable connection be-  
 tween them, for as the laws of God are so  
 many descriptions of the perfections of his  
 own nature, so the transgressions of them are  
 so many blemishes and irregularities in our  
 own; and consequently render us miserable  
 by setting us at a distance from him and hap-  
 piness. What we call the height and per-  
 fection of virtue was our original make, and  
 will be so again in another world; and since  
 all our capacities were framed for the enjoy-  
 ment of God, every disorder in them puts us  
 out of a condition of that happiness we were  
 made for; so that they are in a mistake who  
 think the punishment of sin is altogether the  
 result of vindicative justice in God, and con-  
 sider it no otherwise than as an immediate po-  
 sitive act of his, which he may exert, or let  
 it alone: For sin and wickedness bring on  
 misery, by a fatal necessity in the very nature  
 of the thing. So that for God to pardon is not  
 so properly to omit the laying on of punish-  
 ment, which is the great right the Socinians  
 say he may recede from; but for God to for-  
 give, is to heal the distempers we have con-  
 tracted; to set us right in every part of our  
 distorted



distorted nature; and in short to transform SERM.  
the whole man; that from being guilty he VI.  
shall become innocent and truly holy, which {  
cannot be without moulding him anew.

What then, say they, Rom. ix. 21. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* Yes he hath in the full import and signification of that text; which together with the 15th verse of this chapter, objected by Socinus, (de Serv. par. 1. cap. 1. p. 122.) is not meant of the peremptory salvation or damnation of any one in particular, but of affording the most effectual means of conversion to some and not to others. The drift of that whole discourse of St. Paul's, is to justify that remarkable dispensation of God, in affording the light of the Gospel to the Gentiles, against the objections of the Jews; and he doth it from the absolute sovereignty of God over his creatures, who might afford those extraordinary advantages of salvation to whom he thought fit: Not that he is supposed eternally and irrevocably to reject all others to whom he hath not afforded so great salvation. This would appear very plain to any one, who takes the whole scope and contexture of the intire discourse together, which I omit shewing here at length, because I endeavour to be as short as possible.

But

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But it will be said still, cannot the same almighty power, which first made us out of nothing, effect all this? I answer no, unless they suppose it can work a contradiction. And here is the root of the great error, both of Deists and Socinians; they imagine that God can mould and form the minds of rational and free agents from vice to virtue and holiness, by the same almighty immediate act of power that he can change all other beings from one condition to another, or by which he first made them; which is a gross mistake of the nature of virtue and holiness, the very essence of which consists in its being free; and to say that God can make men holy whether they will or no, which is doing of it by an immediate act, is to say he can work a contradiction. There can be no such thing as moral goodness without freedom of choice; as for instance, if God should make a crooked tree to grow straight, this would not be to make it virtuous, because it hath no understanding or freedom of will: And thus likewise the rectifying our distorted limbs, and transforming our bodies into what condition he thinks fit, depends immediately upon an act of almighty power; and so it is that our change will be wrought at the last day. This indeed is making it glorious and beautiful, but not virtuous and holy; though in a good disposition for the holiness of the soul.

But

But it is not so with the moral corruptions of the mind, for the root of the evil is in the very will it self; and to rectify this by any immediate act of power is to destroy its being; and this was the reason why it was in the power of the Angels and man to fall, because the same freedom of their will, which gave them a possibility of apostacy, was necessary in order to the perfection of virtue and holiness. It is true the more perfect any creature is, he is in the less danger of a fall; and the farther removed from that corruption of the will: But this is not by any force or necessity upon him, but from the perfection of his nature; and if the nature of the thing would have admitted of it, both men and angels had been first made in such a condition that they could not have fallen.

Now forgiveness in God being not only a bare omission of punishment, but the making away the very guilt that overspreads our nature like a leprosy; rectifying a perverse and crooked will; altering of it from a proneness and tendency to guilt and sin, to the quite contrary propensions of virtue and holiness; and restoring it to the image of God, which consisted much in the dominion it had over its own inclinations, so as to make virtue and holiness its perfect choice, and acquiesce in a voluntary complacence in it; all this I say is not to be effected barely by God's receding from a right; no thought can be more poor and groundless, than to imagine that all this  
is




SERM.

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is immediately effected by God's not laying on of punishment; so that on supposition that God resolves only not to punish by any immediate positive act of his, then all is well; and both good and bad are alike in the same condition and disposition for heaven and happiness. No, the great work of salvation is more than this, and mankind was to be restored to its original purity and perfection by the only way it was capable of; namely, by God's affording a divine assistance to this will of man; by a communication of the holy spirit to it in such proportions as should leave it still free; and not in any such irresistible degrees, and mighty influences, as would amount to a force or compulsion; since this would frustrate the design it was given for, and introduce virtue and holiness by such a violence as would destroy that freedom, in which its very essence and being consists.

If we are asked why may not God have afforded this Grace or assistance without any price for it, or propitiation made to his nature? Let them ask God himself that question, who best knows his own nature, what was most agreeable to the purity and perfection of it; and what was, or was not necessary to preserve his attributes inviolable, and reconcile them all to the pardon of sin. He hath revealed to us that a propitiation and atonement was actually made, and a price paid; and this seems to be so agreeable to what we know of the nature of God that it should be so,

so, that we give better reasons for it, than SERM.  
ever they will be able to give against it. This VI.  
is a point that ought not to come into dispute;   
the true question is, whether it be revealed in  
scripture that a propitiation and atonement  
was actually made? This they allow; the  
next question is whether it was made to God?  
They allow it was made to no one else; then  
say we, it must be made to God, otherwise  
the revelation is not sense: It is nonsense to  
say a price shall actually be paid, and yet none  
to receive it; and a propitiation made, and  
yet made to no one. But the scriptures don't  
in express terms say it was made to the justice  
of God; what then? they suppose this; the  
notion was so natural and obvious, that the  
spirit of God saw no necessity for expressing  
it so particularly; well knowing that it was  
not likely for it ever to enter into the heart of  
man, to frame any other thought of it; nor  
did it ever do so till Socinus's time. But there  
is no such justice or mercy in God as we ima-  
gine; true, but there is something answerable  
to them in God; though justice and mercy,  
as they are in us, are no more in God than  
thinking as we do, or human passion.

As we understand it the revelation is good  
sense; there is no contradiction in it, and we  
have sufficient proof of its coming from God;  
and this is all that concerns us to know of  
any revealed mystery. We know very well  
what the payment of a price, and what an  
atonement is; and we are assured that such  
a price

SER M. a price was paid, and an atonement made;  
VI. and that it was made to God; thus much is  
the object of our reason and faith. But what  
the rectitude or goodness, or justice or mercy  
of God are in themselves, *ex parte Dei*;  
what there is in the real nature of God, con-  
sidered in himself, that made such a price or  
atonement necessary; or whether they were  
absolutely necessary, so as that God could not  
work the salvation of man by any other  
means; what were the reasons which inclined  
the divine wisdom to work our Salvation by  
this means and no other; after what manner  
God is atoned, and what is the true and real  
nature of that wondrous efficacy and power  
of this atonement with God; what effect it  
will have upon us in the great change and re-  
novation of our natures at the last day; and  
lastly to which of God's attributes it was  
made in particular, in distinction from all  
other, whether to a property, or only to an  
affection in God, exclusive of every thing  
else that is in him; all this, and every thing  
else of this nature, is the hidden part of this  
mystery, which we wait for till we come to  
another world; and perhaps even then we  
shall not comprehend it as perfectly as the  
Socinians fancy they do now; nor be able to  
conclude so peremptorily and decisively con-  
cerning it, as they do in this life. We de-  
sire but this one concession in order to con-  
found them; and sure it is a modest request,  
that they would own the real nature of God,



as he is in himself to be truly mysterious; SERM.  
and then they will be reduced to this di- VI.  
lemma at every turn, either to acknowledge  
the mystery in the sense that we do, or to  
reject the whole revelation intirely.

Now we see plainly the desperate hardness  
of the whole Socinian hypothesis, which is  
built on so precarious a foundation; on no-  
thing but an opinion of theirs concerning the  
real nature of God, as he is in himself, con-  
sidered antecedently to all his purposes of a  
Saviour, and risk their salvation upon it if  
they are mistaken in a point, wherein God  
himself is only the proper judge. He alone  
hath so perfect and comprehensive a know-  
ledge of his own nature as to know whether  
sin could have been forgiven without a satis-  
faction; whether it were consistent with the  
rectitude and purity of his nature to afford  
his grace in order to repentance, without the  
punishment of sin in any person whatsoever;  
and he alone can tell whether any other satis-  
faction would have been sufficient besides that  
of Christ's death; and in short whether man-  
kind could have been brought to salvation any  
other way as effectually, as that which the  
goodness and wisdom of God hath made  
choice of. He only knows how and after  
what manner he is appeased, atoned, and re-  
conciled to sinful man; and what is that my-  
sterious virtue and divine efficacy of the death  
of Christ, which hath a natural, or rather a  
supernatural tendency in it self to effect this;

SERM. and he likewise best knew the nature of man,  
 VI. by what types and resemblances, what words  
 and conceptions, this wondrous dispensation  
 of God was to be revealed to us; and what  
 would raise in us the liveliest conceptions of  
 this profound mystery, in order to those gra-  
 cious ends for which it was revealed: And  
 therefore it is mere *madness* in people to de-  
 termine positively, it is their own word, as  
 they do, concerning these invisible unconceiv-  
 able things of God, the most intimate secrets  
 of his very essence. This direct intuition upon  
 the nature of God and things of the other  
 world is not for our present imperfect state;  
 the pretending to it hath always been a fatal  
 cause of errors in religion. The proper busi-  
 ness of this life is to have our eyes upon the re-  
 velations of God, and acquiesce in that degree  
 of knowledge, which is to be attained from  
 those familiar words and conceptions those  
 heavenly truths are cloathed in; otherwise we  
 lay those plain and necessary truths of God  
 aside, and set up a new light of our own.  
 Alas! that poor mortal man should thus dis-  
 dain the proper objects of his sight, to gaze  
 only on the Sun till his eyes are dazled;  
 whereas those heavenly rays which flow from  
 it were designed, by the author of nature, to  
 be of use to him only when he looks down-  
 ward, to behold what things lay plainly be-  
 fore him.

And here I cannot but take notice of the  
 rashness of those who, at the same time they  
 maintain

maintain the truth of a satisfaction made to the justice of God, yet will not stick to assert positively, that God could have forgiven sin without it; and that God could have wrought our salvation by other methods as effectual. Let me ask them in the name of God, how do they know this? And if they do not know it, why will they assert it? It is plain they go upon the same mistake with the Socinians, of determining boldly concerning something in the boundless and unfathomable nature of God: And can any thing be more rash than to assert a proposition with such an air of assurance and certainty, which none but God himself can tell whether it be so or no.

They do not consider what an injury they do to christianity, by making such a needless concession to our adversaries, and without any foundation; it is coming within one step of them; for if God might have forgiven without any atonement, it is a shrewd presumption, at least in favour of them, that he did so. And accordingly our adversaries take great advantage of it (Socin. de Serv. par. 3. p. 194.) and Socinus argues thus, *perspici potest quam hallucinentur illi qui, cum negare non auderent Deum potuisse eâ ratione nostra peccata delere si nulla vera pro ipsis satisfactione a quopiam acceptâ nobis ea condonasset, satisfactionem tamen et veram et plenam intervenire eum voluisse dixerunt.* It is true we dare not deny this positively; but let me ask them how dare they affirm it? The only reason



SERM. VI. why we do not deny it is, because we can determine nothing concerning the hidden nature of God. Now let them give me as good a reason why they affirm it; I can give them the same reason why they should not dare to affirm it, because they know as little of the real nature of God as we do; and therefore I think the same modesty would become them as well; not that I think we are upon equal terms, even in this abstruse point, for there are strong presumptions against them; and it seems to be much more conclusive, the wisdom of God made choice of this method of salvation, therefore it was necessary, than to say the wisdom of God might have used other methods, therefore this was not necessary: The antecedent in the former is sure and undeniable, in the latter it is altogether precarious and a groundless assertion, which will not admit of any proof. Besides that on supposition God is just and good, it cannot enter into the heart of man to imagine how he should be reconciled to a sinner without an atonement. I know not how any atonement, less than that of infinite merit, could be either sufficient in it self, or a sufficient ground of hope and comfort for a sinner; nor can I conceive how any other merits could have been infinite than what were divine.

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## S E R M O N VII.

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That the death and sufferings of  
Christ had respect to all preceding  
Generations.

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HEB. 9. 26:

*For then must he often have suffered since the  
foundation of the world: But now once in the  
end of the world, hath he appeared to put  
away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

**B**Y the end of the world is here meant SERM.  
the time of Christ's coming into the VII.  
world, the same that is expressed in other  
places by the fulness of time. The greek is  
express to this purpose, ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, *in*  
*the consummation of the ages*, (i. e.) in the last  
age of the world; when the revelations of  
God were to be filled up, and all his dispen-  
sations for the salvation of mankind com-  
pleted; and that no new dispensation or  
œconomy was ever to succeed to the end of  
the world.

SERM.

VII.

The scope of this chapter is to shew how the Jewish high-priest was a type of Christ, and that the transcendent excellency of one beyond the other might appear, the Apostle, describing how the holy of holies, in the tabernacle, was a semblance of heaven, the place of God's more immediate presence, makes a comparison in three particulars: As the High Priest entered only into that earthly tabernacle, so Christ entered into heaven it self: Again, as the High Priest entered only with the blood of beasts, so Christ entered with his own blood: And lastly, as the High Priest repeated this every year, so Christ was to perform it once for all; at the 25th verse, *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others.* Then follow the words of the text, which are a proof of the reasonableness of this, drawn from an absurdity which would follow from a supposition of the contrary. *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, &c.* (i. e.) If Christ must often have made an oblation of his blood, by way of atonement for sin, why then he must as often have shed that blood; and so he must have been frequently first dying, and then offering his blood ever since the beginning of the world; ever since there was any sin to be atoned for.

The words thus explained are a demonstrative proof, that the death and sufferings of Christ



Christ had respect to all preceding generations of men, as well as to those which were to succeed him to the end of the world: A truth so plain and evident that if it were any way consistent with the Socinian hypothesis, they would never have denied it: But because none of those ends which they propose, and the reasons they give of our Saviour's dying, can have any relation to such as lived in the world before his appearing in it, they are under this dilemma, either of asserting that the death of Christ had no respect to them; or of allowing the real virtue and merits of it. Since nothing but this could have rendered it of any benefit or efficacy with respect to any that went before him: And if once those Persons who give every text of scripture a turn to lessen the dignity of his person, and the virtue of his sacrifice could prove, that the death of Christ had no respect to those who lived before it; people would be easily induced to believe that it was of no great importance to those who lived after.

Wherefore in discoursing of this doctrine, of so great consequence to our christian faith, I shall observe this method.

1. I shall make out the truth of it a little more fully.

2. By way of farther confirmation of it, I shall shew by what degrees this great mystery opened, from the foundation of the world to

SERM. the fulness of time, here called the consum-  
 VII. mation of the ages.

3. I shall consider the reasons of this wondrous dispensation of providence in deferring the coming of Christ into the world so long, and why he chose to appear at the time he did.

1. As to the first, I have already observed that the words of this text is a demonstration, that Christ died for the sins of all that ever were before him, and we cannot make sense of them upon any other supposition; no says Socinus it infers quite the contrary; (de Serv. par. 2. cap. 26.) for if the virtue of Christ's sacrifice could extend to them who were before that sacrifice, what need was there that he should often have suffered, upon the supposition that his blood must be often offered? The answer is ready, because the blood must be shed, before there could be any oblation of it. The shedding of Christ's blood was a necessary condition of the oblation of it; they perplex the matter by distinguishing between the shedding, and oblation of the blood; whereas the question here is, whether both the shedding and the oblation of that blood was necessary to be performed often, or once for all. If they were to be performed often, the Apostle's inference is, that they must have been so from the foundation of the world: And since it is not necessary, it was sufficient that both should be performed

performed now once in the fulness of time; SERM.  
VII.

which was of the same power and efficacy with respect to them who lived before him, as if it had been repeated all along with the same frequency with the Jewish anniversary sacrifice. But to prevent all evasion, let us resolve the Apostle's argument; why must Christ have suffered often? Because it is supposed that he was often offered. Why must he have been often offered from the foundation of the world? Because there was sin ever to be atoned for. But if the being offered once for all in the consummation of the ages, will be of sufficient virtue and efficacy to take away sin (sin in the abstract, which could not be taken away without him) as effectual for that purpose as if he had been often offered, then there was no necessity for that constant repetition of it from the foundation of the world. And thus we are come back again to the Apostle's first proposition, which is the thing he asserts and proves. Now that Christ could die but once, and consequently his blood be offered but once, he farther proves in the following verse from the common state and condition of that human nature which Christ took upon him. *As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this to judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* Observe the opposition, that on that one offering *once* offered are laid the sins of *many*; and therefore need not to have been repeated;

it



SERM. it follows, *and unto them that look for him shall*  
 VII. *he appear the second time without sin unto salva-*  
 tion. So that there is no necessity for his ap-  
 pearing any more than twice; once to take  
 away the sins of the world; and another time  
 to judge it. And it is plainly implied that the  
 virtue of his blood extends as far as his judg-  
 ment, and that is we know to all mankind.

Another text I shall produce to this purpose,  
 is Revel. 13. 8. *Whose names are not written*  
*in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the*  
*foundation of the world*, i. e. in that promise  
 of God made at the beginning of the world,  
 pursuant to his own eternal purpose and de-  
 cree; namely, that the serpent should bruise  
 his heel. But says Socinus (ibid.) the words  
*from the foundation of the world*, are not to  
 be joined to *the Lamb slain*, but to the for-  
 mer part of the sentence, because it is so,  
 Revel. 17. 8. So that it is granted the natural  
 order of the words is against him; but though  
 we should grant this to be true, the argument  
 holds strong and unanswerable against the So-  
 cinians; for the book of life is the *book of*  
*the Lamb slain*; and the names are written in  
 this book *from the foundation of the world*;  
 the consequence is clear, therefore he was slain  
 in the purpose of God from the foundation  
 of the world. 1 Pet. 1. 18. 19. 20. nay more,  
 it is plainly said, Revel. 21. 27. that none  
 should enter into the heavenly Jerusalem ex-  
 cept those *whose names are written in the book*  
*of life of the Lamb*; that very book in  
 which

which the names are said to be written from the beginning of the world; and therefore none shall enter into heaven but through him; and if so, then the sacrifice of this Lamb must have respect to all that went before his coming into the world, as well as to those who succeeded him; nothing could be a plainer proof that the conditions of salvation of all mankind from the beginning of the world were in Christ; for surely the Socinians, who are so great assertors of the freedom of our wills, can never say that this was a book of any unconditionate and absolute decrees.

Another text I shall produce to this purpose, is, Gal. 3. 17. *And this I say that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, i. e. to Abraham, as it is in the verse before, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.* From whence these two things are very plain and undeniable; namely, That the covenant made with man in Christ is the very same that was made to Abraham. It was the covenant *confirmed before of God in Christ*; and therefore continued firm and unalterable notwithstanding the giving of the law. The other thing as plain from the words is, that the covenant then made in Christ to Abraham, was no new one but a confirmation only of a former covenant made to Adam from the beginning of the world, and therefore it is expressly said here


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here to be only *confirmed* of God in Christ, so long before the giving of the law, which the Apostle two verses after observes, was not given by way of a new covenant with mankind; but it was added because of transgressions; i. e. to prevent idolatry till the promised seed should come: And at the 24th verse he shews a farther use of the law, *wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*; i. e. by types and shadows, by figures and resemblances of him; to give the world some imperfect notions of the promised seed, and raise in them hopes and expectations of his coming into the world. From whence it plainly appears, that in truth and reality there is but one covenant made with mankind; that which was made in Christ from the beginning of the world, which remains ever the same in substance, though it appear to differ according to the several methods and degrees of revelation. For the consequence of the Apostle's arguing here, is in short this: If the law could not void or disannul that covenant that was made to our first Parents, and afterwards confirmed to Abraham; then it remains now in the same force and virtue that it had from the beginning of the world.

Many more texts might be produced to shew how the virtue of Christ's sacrifice extended to all generations of men, but I have chose to instance in these only, because they are so clear and demonstrative, that I do  
not



not see how they can be evaded. But this S E R M.  
great truth will more fully appear, when we VII.  
consider the second thing I proposed, which   
was,

2. By what degrees this great mystery opened, from the foundation of the world to the fulness of time; whence it will appear, that the coming of a Saviour into the world was the great concernment of all ages.

Before I speak to these ages in particular, I shall by the way observe, what is very remarkable, that there had been new discoveries and clearer revelations of Jesus Christ in every fifth century successively from Adam to the fulness of time. There is only one of those periods which I cannot yet fix, and that is between Adam and Enoch, whose translation was about a thousand years after the first promise of a Saviour; and five hundred years before the preaching of Noah. From whence we may observe the great exactness and propriety of those words of the text, *in the consummation of the ages*, which is quite lost in our English translation, and called, *the end of the world*, which hath perplexed the sense, and given occasion for unnecessary scruple. I shall speak of each of these in their order; and accordingly to begin with the first.

The first revelation of him was as early as the first sin that was committed, immediately upon the fall of our first parents,  
Gen.

SERM. Gen. 3. 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The substance of which prophecy is, that though the devil in the form of the serpent had by his temptation drawn the woman over from God to his party; and seemed to have full power and possession of her and all her posterity; yet God would bring it to pass that there should be a continual strife between the race of mankind and that of the fallen angels; that he would instil into them such a principle as should stir them up to break off their yolk, and enable them to regain that freedom and happiness they lost. And that this should be so remarkably performed, that a certain man, for it is He in the Heb. who was to descend from her, should quite destroy that whole power and dominion the devil had gained over mankind, signified here by the *breaking of the serpent's head*. But that the devil should be allowed so far an advantage over that person, that he should put him to some pain and anguish in the performance of this great work, signified here by the serpent's *biting of his heel*. Now, if people will allow that Christ was to be foretold at all, how was it possible the whole matter should be expressed more fully, and after any manner more lively and comprehensive; and what is very remarkable, He is called here the seed of the woman emphatically, as being to be born of a pure virgin by the almighty power of God.

Now,

Now, this was a promise made to our first SERM.  
parents, and consequently to all their poste- VII.  
rity in them; it was made upon occasion of  
the first sin that ever was committed, which  
plainly shews the forgiveness of that sin, and  
the remitting of the punishment, and restitu-  
tion of their former innocence was to be  
effected by that very person who was to  
break that serpent's head that beguiled them  
into it.

Though this prophecy is conveyed down  
to us in a short and figurative expression, yet  
in all probability it was more fully understood  
when it was first delivered than ever it was  
afterwards till the coming of that seed of the  
woman into the world. And that which  
seems to me the most probable account of the  
origin of sacrifices is, that they were at first  
ordained by God by way of explanation of  
this prophecy; to denote what was signified  
by that expression of the serpent's *bruising his  
heel*; namely, that the devil should prevail so  
far against him as to cause him to be put to  
death; and the offering them for sin was a  
plain indication how that death was to be for  
the sins of the world; for the very sins for  
which those sacrifices were offered: And no  
doubt in their first institution they were ex-  
actly calculated to prefigure and represent that  
one great sacrifice which was to be offered for  
the sins of mankind; but by tradition, through  
many generations all the world over, they be-  
came



SERM. came corrupted and abused to idolatry, and  
 VII. lost that similitude and aptness they had to  
 typify and represent what they were at first  
 designed for. Soon after this, we find Abel  
 offering a sacrifice of the firstlings of his  
 flock; which was approved of, as is generally  
 believed, after the same manner that God ap-  
 proved of other sacrifices afterwards. i. e. by  
 consuming it with fire from heaven; and He  
 himself became a most signal emblem and  
 type of that one great sacrifice. He was slain  
 by the envy of his brother, as Christ was by his  
 own nation and kindred, of whom it is ex-  
 pressly said that it was *for envy they delivered*  
*him*. Abel suffered, because his sacrifice was  
 more acceptable to God than his brother's; as  
 Christ was crucified for the very same reason  
 by the Jews, because his sacrifice was to be of  
 more virtue and merit with God than their  
 legal sacrifices: Nor could there be a more ex-  
 press emblem of the people that crucified  
 him than Cain; for that very action they  
 were driven out from their city and temple,  
 where the more immediate presence of God  
 was among them; as He was from the face  
 of God; and like him to be fugitives and va-  
 gabonds in the earth.

The believing and faithful expectation of  
 this promised seed, and the representation of  
 him by the sacrificing of beasts; which was  
 the most lively emblem of the manner how  
 he was to break the head of the serpent,  
 namely, by his death and sufferings which is  
 therefore

therefore expressed by the bruising only of his heel, because he was to rise again and triumph over death and hell. This I say is the only account we have of the religion of men before the flood: And therefore it is more than probable, that the exercise and profession of this religion gave rise to that distinction between the sons of God and the sons of men. The posterity of Cain, though it is not in the least likely they should have utterly rejected the promise of this deliverer, being so plainly expressed; yet it is probable they looked only to the former part of it, and expected one who should break the power of the Devil by main force, and lead them again into Paradise by a high hand; a deliverer without the sufferings; such a one as Eve was in expectation of, when because of that promise she named her eldest son Cain; i. e. *possession*, in hopes he was that promised seed that should restore them to Paradise. Whereas the posterity of Seth, who is said to be given to Eve instead of Abel, had a just regard to the latter part of the promise, namely, that this deliverance was to be by anguish and suffering, and accordingly kept up that visible worship of God, which was a lively representation of that promised seed that was to come into the world to suffer.

Now, that it may appear that this is no bare conjecture, but founded upon the holy Scriptures and plainly deducible from thence; let us observe what St. Paul says of the sa-

SERM. crifice that Abel offered ; it hath mightily  
 VII. puzzled both Jews and Christians to assign  
 the defect of Cain's offering, and give the true reason why it was rejected, for he brought of the fruits of the ground, as he was a tiller ; as Abel did of his flock, who was a shepherd ; the Apostle tells us the true difference, Heb. 11. 4. *by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.* By what faith ? Was it by believing the existence of God, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him ? If Cain had not believed this, he would never have brought any sacrifice ; Or was it the believing that God made the worlds ? Certainly Cain believed this as well as Abel. No, the Apostle in the verse before speaks his own meaning very properly ; *through faith we understand that the worlds were framed.* How ? *By the word of God ;* by that ~~word~~ of which the Jews themselves have always spoke as of a divine and distinct person. (See Philo leg. all. l. 1. p. 33. W. E. p. 112.) by that word mentioned in the 1st chap. of this same Epistle and the third verse ; and by that word which St. John says was in the beginning with God ; the great aptness of which word to express that divine person arises from hence, that God is said to have spoke all things into being ; which form of speaking raises in us the most lively idea of the infinite and incomprehensible power of him by whom all things were created : The divine nature, of which that person was partaker,



taker, was utterly incomprehensible to us, and therefore we could come to a knowledge of him no otherwise than by a word. As a word is the readiest and most perfect indication of a man's inward thoughts and intentions, and the readiest execution of his will; and denotes the most absolute and unlimited command; this is by accommodation and analogy made use of by the wisdom of God, to give the world some knowledge of that divine person, who was to reveal his will to mankind; and execute all that was performed by his unbounded and infinite power.

This was the faith that gave his sacrifice the preference. This was the very person that was promised, who was to be born of the seed of the woman, and whose heel the Serpent was to bruise; accordingly Abel's sacrifice was of the firstlings of his flock, by way of propitiation and atonement; it implied a plain confession, both of a full conviction of his own guilt, and of the necessity of some atonement for it: By this it was that he *obtained witness that he was righteous*: By this it was that he being dead yet speaketh: Speaketh what? Something to all succeeding generations; and that can be nothing but the pointing out that great sacrifice, which was to take away the sins of the world.

On the other hand, the sacrifice of Cain was of the fruits of the earth, eucharistick only; which was neither an acknowledgment of his corruption, nor the necessity of

SERM. appeasing God for it; nor was it any way  
 VII. expressive or typical of that seed of the wo-  
 { man, which was to come into the world to  
 suffer death for sin: Therefore no eucharistick  
 sacrifice could be acceptable to God, but in  
 the contemplation of that great propitiatory  
 one. No service could be pleasing to God till  
 he was first atoned; and therefore the fruits  
 of the earth, only by way of praise and  
 thanksgiving, were reserved for that pure sa-  
 crifice in the times of the Messiah, when the  
 pardon of sin was compleated: Nay this seems  
 to be the difference between the two sacrifices  
 assigned by God himself, in his reasoning with  
 Cain upon his trouble and resentment at his  
 reproach. Gen. iv. 7. *If thou dost well shalt  
 thou not be accepted?* If thou hast no sin thy  
 eucharistick sacrifice would be acceptable:  
*And if thou dost not well, sin* (i. e.) sin of-  
 fering lyeth at the door (Lightfoot) by way of  
 atonement for thy sin.

Now as Abel's sacrifice was the first type  
 of the manner of our deliverance by that  
 person who was to descend from the woman,  
 and for that reason very acceptable to God;  
 so the death of him who offered it was per-  
 mitted for these two great ends of the divine  
 wisdom: One was, that by the shedding of  
 his own blood immediately after, he might  
 become a more lively emblem of him, whose  
 death was to succeed all those bloody sacri-  
 fices, and abolish them; and to shew how  
 the blood of beasts could not take away sin.  
 The

The other was to be an argument of full conviction to all generations of mankind, that the great deliverer promised was not to restore them to any earthly paradise; which, from the names of their two sons, was thought to be the mistaken expectation of our first parents, and probably of all the race of Cain; as the expectation of an earthly kingdom is the hopes of the Jews to this day. For though his sacrifice was approved of, and openly declared to be pleasing to God, and the other's was rejected; yet Cain lived, and Abel died. And though we at this distance of time, being accustomed to daily spectacles of mortality, can hear this related without any concern; yet this natural death was a new thing to them, it was the first instance of that kind, and therefore very startling to those who first saw it, and naturally caused such reflections as these: Namely, that the great deliverer promised was not to restore them to any earthly paradise; for then he who was so approved of God would not have died. This made them look to another world; and the conclusion was obvious, that this great person must lead them thither, and that must be through the jaws of death, the way that Abel went; and that could not be without dying himself: And thus the sacrifice of the death of Abel became an excellent comment upon that promise, that *the seed of the woman should break the Serpent's head, and that he should bruise his heel.*



SERM.

VII.

As I observed before, though these passages are delivered down to us in short, yet certainly they were attended with many circumstances which rendered them more expressive and significant to them; though from what we have recorded it is very evident how the promised seed was the great object of the faith of men from the foundation of the world: And, as we have seen, it is a conjecture not altogether groundless, that the prefiguring and representation of his sufferings, in a religious and solemn worship, whose heel the Serpent was to bruise, in opposition to the expectation of a worldly and triumphant deliverer, gave the first occasion to that distinction between the *Sons of God*, and the sons of men; which appellation of the sons of God was continued after the flood, and attributed to the faithful in every age. In Job. i. 6. we read there was a day, when *the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*. And the same term is retained in the new testament, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.*

2. The next remarkable period in the Church of God, that I can as yet fix, was the preaching and translation of Enoch, who was said to have *walked with God*: Which expression learned men have with very good reason understood of his being a teacher, as St. Jude expressly tells us he was a prophet.

His

His translation alive into heaven was a type of Christ's resurrection and ascension; as the murder of Abel was of his crucifixion and sufferings; which seemed to be very seasonable, being soon after the death of Adam. For by this time the spirit of infidelity, in all likelihood, began to prevail; for seeing this so much expected deliverer not come into the world in so many generations, it was natural for wicked men, such as the posterity of Cain, to grow impatient and faithless. And now that both Adam and his wife were dead, to whom the promise was made, it confirmed them in their unbelief. For it was an obvious mistake, to think that the great person promised to them should be born of themselves, and in their time; and they might well be presumed to live to see that great deliverance promised to them: Therefore the translation of so remarkable a person as Enoch, the seventh from Adam in a direct line, and father and head of so numerous a family, was full of seasonable instruction to the world; and designed no doubt as a miraculous confirmation of his doctrine and prophecy; which, by what St. Jude says of him, and can be rationally inferred from the short account we have of the religion of men before the flood, was to this effect.

I. For a renewal and confirmation of that promise made to the world, to convince them that such a deliverer would come; and to explain to men the true nature of that deli-

SERM.  
VII.

verance, that it was not any restitution to an earthly paradise, which was so natural for them to expect; but the bringing of them to heaven, to that place whither he was afterwards carried up alive, to teach them to have their eye upon the joys and pleasures of another world. And as this was a reward of his walking with God, of his faith and virtue and holiness, they learned that they were to obtain this great deliverance by the same methods; by faithful perseverance in a life of virtue and goodness: And withal it was natural to infer, that such persons should be rewarded after death; but that the wicked should receive their punishment in another world: And accordingly we have a clear prophecy of his to this purpose in St. Jude, ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, &c.*

2. Another seasonable instruction this taking of Enoch alive up into heaven at that time was, to convince men that the deliverance to be wrought by that great person expected, was to be a deliverance both of soul and body. They seeing all men dye, notwithstanding the deliverance promised, it was obvious for them to begin to imagine, that if there were any deliverance in another world, it must be only for the soul; and there could be nothing  
of



of it expected for the body, which they ob- S E R M.  
served turned all to stench and rottenness: VII.

But this was an undeniable confutation of this mistake, and a sure evidence that the promise had respect to the body as well as to the soul. And it was a plain revelation of the doctrine of the resurrection of those same bodies, which was to be effected by the power of his resurrection, who was to break the Serpent's head; and who was that very person, designed in Enoch's prophecy, who was to come to judgment in all that solemnity described.

But notwithstanding all the methods of God, for the information and conviction of the world, infidelity, and that impiety which is the sure consequence of it, prevailed universally; insomuch that between this, and the times of Noah, who was a preacher of repentance, Gen. vi. 5. *the wickedness of man became great in the earth; and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*: And the cause of this universal depravation is assigned to be the promiscuous marriages of the sons of God, (i. e.) the posterity of Seth, with the daughters of the infidel race of Cain; who, instead of having a just regard to the prosperity of God's Church, and the promoting of true religion in their marriages, chose rather to gratify their lust and their ambition; insomuch that in all likelihood there was not another family left besides that of Noah, which had preserved  
itself

SERMON. itself pure and unmingled with that ungodly  
 VII. race; which is not obscurely hinted in that  
 { expression in his character, *that he was righteous in his generation.* And therefore the  
 promised seed being to descend from him he  
 was miraculously preserved from the flood.

3. The faith and expectation of that promised seed, of a person who was to be the great deliverer of mankind, to free them from that bondage gained over them by the Devil, was conveyed down by tradition through the posterity of Seth to the days of Abraham, about three hundred years after the flood; about which time the world became new peopled; and therefore God, in his wisdom, thought it seasonable to give a farther explication of that promise of a deliverer made from the beginning of the world; which was done, Gen. xxii. 18. *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* The plain meaning of which words is, that the seed of the woman, the great deliverer promised from the beginning, should descend from his line; and that it was a renewal of that same promise, and not a new one, is plain from Gen. xvii. 19. *Thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant.* It was only the same confirmed that was from the beginning, and which was to continue for ever; the discovery of which was the cause of great joy and transport to him, Gen. xvii. 17.

Now


Now this very son, with whom this everlasting covenant was to be confirmed, and from whom that great deliverer was to descend, was commanded to be offered up a sacrifice to God by his own natural father; a thing so strange and startling, which carried such an appearance of inhumanity and cruelty, that it must even then have been thought designed in order to some great end and purpose of God: And we cannot think that Abraham, and those to whom this whole transaction was communicated, made no use or application of it. The inference was very obvious, namely, that the great person promised to descend from him should be treated after the same manner; and that the means of the deliverance to be wrought was by his suffering death; and that this was the meaning of the Serpent's biting of his heel.

S E R M.  
VII.

This was the substance of it; but there were many circumstances attending that sacrificing of Isaac, which rendered it much more expressive and significant to us. He was promised and named before he was born; he came into the world by the almighty power of God beyond the condition of nature, his father being old, and his mother past child-bearing; he was to be offered by the particular direction and commandment of God upon mount Moriah; which, as St. Jerom observes from the Jews, was divided into two parts, one whereon the temple was afterwards built, the other mount Calvary,  
the



SERM. the very mount on which this deliverer was  
 } VII. to be crucified. And as Isaac carried the  
 } wood on which he was to be sacrificed, so  
 Christ bore the cross on which he was to be  
 crucified up to the same place: And lastly  
 the ram that was offered instead of Isaac,  
 was a plain representation of those sacrifices,  
 which were to be substituted instead of the  
 promised seed, till he himself suffered after  
 that very manner that was typified in Isaac.  
 Though we, who have known the comple-  
 tion of them, do more fully understand the  
 design of all these concurrent circumstances,  
 yet the main import and design of this  
 whole transaction was not unknown in those  
 days; for our Saviour says to the Jews,  
*John viii. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced*  
*to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad:*  
 And certainly he would not have rejoiced in  
 the foreknowledge of, or rather the faith of,  
 a thing which had no respect to him, and  
 in which he was no way concerned. The  
 reason of his rejoicing was, because the  
 coming into the world of this great person  
 promised from the beginning, which pro-  
 mise was now renewed to him, was not only  
 his in particular, but the concernment of all  
 mankind: And no doubt but the renewal of  
 this promise, and the solemn manner of it,  
 was industriously spread by him and his po-  
 sterity among the worshippers of the true  
 God, till the time of Moses; among all who  
 lived in the belief and expectation of this  
 great.

great person; infomuch that in this interval SERM.  
 we find Job expressing his faith, xix. 25. in VII.  
 a very lively strain, *I know that my redeemer*   
*liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter*  
*day upon the earth: And though after my skin*  
*worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall*  
*I see God, whom I shall see for my self, and*  
*mine eyes shall behold and not another; though*  
*my reins be consumed within me.*

By this time, which was about five hundred years after that of Abraham, tradition began to fail: Hitherto the doctrine of this promised seed, and the representation of him by sacrifices was conveyed down, through few hands, from Adam to Moses: But now the life of man was come to its shortest period, and the world more populous, the current of oral tradition began to be disturbed and corrupted; infomuch, that the prophecies and doctrines relating to this great person could be preserved no longer in their purity: Then the wisdom of God saw it necessary that they should be committed to writing by Moses; with such a particular influence and direction of the holy spirit of God, that though the accounts are short, yet that nothing was omitted which was necessary for the information of future ages in this great doctrine of the promised seed, to which all he wrote hath a tendency. From whence we see the inestimable value of his writings, which is the only history of mankind extant in the world from the first creation

SERM. creation of man to his days ; and as old as the  
 VII. first invention of letters is said to be among  
 the heathen.

At this period of time God opened to the world a yet farther light into the knowledge of this great person, who was promised from the beginning. God speaks plainly to Moses, Deuter. xviii. 18, 19. *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee ; and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him : And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him :* From whence it was plain, that this great promised deliverer was to be a teacher of the will of God ; that he was to teach them more than Moses had done ; that he was to be born among that people ; and that, when he came, absolute obedience was to be paid him, upon pain of God's utmost displeasure.

Now what was probably the mistake of our first parents concerning the promise of that seed of the woman which should break the Serpent's head, namely, that he should do it by a high hand, and restore that earthly paradise they lost, seems to have been the fatal error of every generation, and what mankind is naturally apt to fall into ; and therefore, since by this time those sacrifices which were at first ordained for the explanation



tion of those words, that the Serpent *should* SERM.  
*bruise his heel*, and to cause mankind to have VII.  
an eye to the sufferings of that great deli-  
verer; because these became corrupted and  
abused to idolatry, and had lost that aptitude  
and natural tendency they had to express his  
death and sufferings; therefore God was  
pleased to rectify and restore them in some  
degree to their original purity. They were  
now reduced to some regularity and method  
by a particular providence among those people  
from whom he was to descend: Then was  
the solemnity of the paschal lamb instituted;  
their great anniversary sacrifice of expiation;  
the oblation of the daily sacrifice; and a ta-  
bernacle of witness erected for the celebration  
of this service; all of them calculated with the  
greatest exactness and nicety to express the  
death and sufferings of this great deliverer.

At the same time, for a lively and expressive  
emblem of the very manner of his death, and  
the true nature of that deliverance he was to  
work for us, Moses was commanded Numb.  
xxi. 8. to make a *fiery Serpent*, and set it  
upon a pole; that those that were bitten by  
the Serpents in the wilderness might live, for  
their biting was otherwise mortal. One would  
at first wonder, why God should make choice  
of the form of a Serpent to represent the lift-  
ing up of our Saviour's body upon the cross;  
and appoint the very shape of that creature  
to save their lives, by which they were mor-  
tally

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tally stung. The reason is now plain, because the biting of our Saviour's heel, which was fulfilled by the death of human nature upon the cross, was the very means by which our deliverance was wrought: Thus the same old Serpent, by which mankind fell at first, was the occasion of our rising again. All the malice he wrecked upon our Saviour tended directly to the destruction of that dominion he had gained over us; and it was by this very means that the promise made from the beginning of the world was fulfilled, that the seed of the woman should break the Serpent's head.

That this was the intent of that emblem is plain, not only from the nature of the thing itself, and the aptness of this analogy; but from hence that he was to make a *fiery* Serpent, i. e. exactly of the same shape and form of them that bit them: And besides it is not obvious to think how a Serpent could be a proper emblem of our Saviour's body. In John iii. 15. the similitude is only between their being lifted up, *as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up*; it follows, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, i. e. in those sufferings of his by which we are healed; and brought upon him by the malice of that old Serpent which beguiled us: As he had ruined us by the fruit of the tree of good and evil, so he thus became an instrument of opening the

the way for us to that tree of life, which was an emblem of Christ; and therefore it was guarded with flaming swords, and mankind driven out from it, till he appeared who was to overcome death and bring life and immortality to light; and then they were to eat, and live for ever.

5. If one come down about five hundred years lower to the days of the Prophets, which by St. Peter's computation begins with Samuel, as he affirms, Acts iii. 24. *All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days*, i. e. the days of this great person promised from the beginning; of that same prophet foretold by Moses, as it is in the foregoing verses. And now in this age of the world both parts of that prophecy extant from the foundation of it, begin to be explained at large; the person of this promised seed begins to be described; the very place of his birth foretold; the nature of his kingdom; how and in what sense he was to break the Serpent's head, Jer. xxxi. 33. by putting his laws into their inward parts, and writing them in their hearts. Daniel ix. 24. by finishing transgression, and making an end of sin; by making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. He is described as one that is to make but a mean appearance in the world, as *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; as one that was to be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised



SERM. *for our iniquities ; as one on whom was to be*  
 VII. *the chastisement of our peace, and by whose*  
 { *stripes we were to be healed ; for the Lord was*  
*to lay on him the iniquities of us all. He is*  
*described as one that was to be taken from*  
*prison, and from judgment ; to be brought as a*  
*lamb to the slaughter ; and cut off out of the*  
*land of the living. What a wonderful com-*  
*ment was this of Isaiah's, upon the Serpent's*  
*bruising of his heel, near seven hundred years*  
*before it came to pass. The exact sum that*  
*he was sold and betrayed for, and how they*  
*were to be laid out in buying a potter's field*  
*was foretold by Jeremiah : Nay several concur-*  
*rent circumstances of his death were foretold*  
*near four hundred years before this ; as particu-*  
*larly the piercing his hands and his feet, as he*  
*was nailed to the cross ; the giving him vinegar*  
*to drink ; the casting lots upon his garments ;*  
*and the very words he spoke upon the cross,*  
*my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

Nay the exact space of time he was to be in the grave was prefigured by the remarkable type of Jonas being three days and three nights in the belly of the whale ; a thing so odd and miraculous, that it could not be supposed to have been feigned ; and if it be said it was, yet why was it so apt an emblem ? And why was it the precise time of three days and three nights ? Nothing less than that wisdom which foresaw what it was to represent, could have determined this circumstance of it so exactly.

Thus

Thus to him gave all the prophets witness, SERM. VII.  
*that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,* Acts x. 43.

From whence it is plain that the whole substance of their prophecies tended to shew, that the forgiveness of sin was to be effected by this great person: Nay, the words import that they believed it themselves; that it was the constant faith of all the prophets, that remission of sin was to be had in him; for this text can be meant of no other person, as is asserted, Acts iv. 12. That *there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*: And therefore it must be of this salvation that the Prophets 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. are said to have *enquired and searched diligently. Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified before-hand.* Testified what? First *the sufferings of Christ*, and then, *the glory which should be revealed in him*; the two things spoke of concerning this great person from the foundation of the world. They spoke by the *spirit of Christ*; and the whole scope and design of what they spoke was, that remission of sins was to be had in his name; and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to imagine, that what they prophesied of had no respect to themselves; that they had no faith in their own prophecies; and that what they searched so diligently after did not at all concern them.

SERM.

VII.

Whosoever reads the eleventh of the Hebrews considerately, will find that faith was the great prevailing virtue with God in every generation from the beginning of the world. The design there is to comfort the christians under their afflictions, from a prospect of the coming of Christ to judgment, verse 37. of the foregoing chapter, *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come; and will not tarry.* It is by this faith the just shall live: And from hence the Apostle takes occasion to speak of the faith of just persons from the first creation; whose faith was of the same nature, and who were supported under their afflictions by the same prospect of the coming of Christ; for otherwise there is no parallel, and their example would not have been so proper for influencing the minds of christians. And indeed there are undeniable instances among those reckoned up to shew that Christ was the object of it. I have already spoke of the faith of Abel. Verse the 5th. *By faith Enoch was translated;* by what faith he tells us in the following verse. *He that comes to God must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* i. e. he must believe the reward that God had promised, of a great and glorious deliverer and restorer of mankind. Again, at the 26th. verse, *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures*



had respect to all preceding generations.

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tures of Egypt. He thought it more honour-  
able to be related to those people from whom

SERM.

VII.

that prophet was to descend, of whom he hath so plainly foretold; than to be the greatest monarch upon earth. The application the Apostle makes of that whole discourse at the 39th. verse is this, *These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.* What promise? Not the promise of heaven and happiness when they died; for that they surely had: Not the promise of the land of Canaan, which was a type of it; for that was performed to the posterity of Abraham: No, but the promise of that person through whom they hoped for a better resurrection. As it follows in the original, *God foreseeing something better concerning us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* i. e. God by reserving the fulfilling that promise to our days, hath in his wisdom ordered it so, that they did not obtain the completion of that promise of his coming into the world sooner than we; and that full and clear evidence, and demonstration of the truth of what they hoped for by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, was reserved to be manifested in our days: Accordingly in the following verses, Heb. xii. 1, 2 he exhorts us, who have received the completion of God's promise as soon as they, *to run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*, which is a natural and easy account of that difficult text.

SERM. And from hence likewise we see both the true

VII. meaning, and the reasonableness of that saying  
 of our Saviour's, Luke xi. 50, 51. that *the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias: Verily I say unto you it shall be required of this generation, i. e. by the total ruin and destruction of them, which we know was more immediately for the crucifying of our Saviour; but by implication for the death of all that ever prophesied of him, or typified him from Abel to Zacharias: For the same obstinate spirit of infidelity that prompted that generation to crucify him, would have prompted them to all the cruelty of their forefathers towards all that ever typified or spoke of him; and as far as in them lay, they treated them with the like barbarity, and murdered them all over again in him.*

My method would lead me to the sixth and last of those ages mentioned in my text, but the time failing I must break off the thread of my discourse here, and leave you to consider what hath been said.

S E R M O N

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## S E R M O N VIII.

Why Christ appeared at the time he did, and not sooner.

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HEB. 9. 26:

*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: But now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

**I**N a former discourse upon these words, SERM. VIII.  
the last time I had occasion to speak in this place, when I had shewn how they were a plain demonstrative proof that the sacrifice of Christ's death and the virtue of his blood had respect to all who lived before his coming into the world; I then observed that what is here translated, *the end of the world*, is in the original, *the consummation of ages*: And when I had considered the great exactness and propriety of that expression, as referring to the several periods of time, wherein there were still clearer revelations made of Christ's coming

O 4

from



SERM. from the foundation of the world; which  
 VIII. happened in every fifth century, and almost  
 at the same distance of time; the method  
 I then proposed for what I had to speak to  
 from these words was,

1. To shew by what degrees this great mystery of salvation opened from the foundation of the world to the *fulness of time*, here called *the consummation of ages*.

2. As far as our shallow capacity can fathom the depth of the wisdom of God, to consider the reasons of this wondrous dispensation of providence, in deferring the coming of Christ into the world so long; and why he appeared at the time he did.

As to the first of these, I have already passed the several ages from the first promise of a Saviour, Gen. iii. 15. down to the end of the prophets; which last period began with Samuel and ended in the time of the captivity. And now therefore I am to go on to the sixth and last of those ages intimated by the Apostle in my text.

6. And that is the space of Daniel's seventy weeks. Now in the time of the captivity, the precise term of years was foretold when this promised seed should come. Dan. ix. 24. it is said, *seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city; to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins; and to make reconciliation for iniquity; and to bring in everlasting righteousness; and to seal up the vision and prophecy; and to anoint*

*anoint the most holy*; which by the scripture computation of a day for a year makes up the space of 490 years: This number in the following verse is divided into three distinct periods; *know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem* (which Huetius with great probability places in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus; and by his computation every thing falls in naturally and easily) *unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks*, i. e. forty nine years; under which time the streets and publick edifices of Jerusalem were not finished, though the wall was built in haste in fifty two days. The next space mentioned is that of *threescore and two weeks*, i. e. four hundred thirty four years; after the expiration of which the Messiah was to be cut off. He was to confirm the covenant with many *for one week*, i. e. in the last seven years; and in the midst of this space he was to cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, i. e. by offering up himself; by which means all those sacrifices that were typical and representative of him lost their use.

This is the fullest and plainest comment upon the first promise of a Saviour; it explains his breaking of the Serpent's head, by making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness; and those words of having his heel bruised, by his being cut off, and so making reconciliation for iniquity; and  
computes

SERM. computes exactly, near five hundred years  
 VIII. before, what time this should happen. This  
 is the very covenant which he is said here to  
*confirm with many*; the covenant made with  
 all mankind from the beginning of the world.  
 And now the exact time of this great deliverer  
 was thus pointed out, there was no more oc-  
 casion for prophets; the world had then no-  
 thing more to do but to wait for the time,  
 and see the event of all this, and of all other  
 prophecies that were made of him.

During this space, there was no prophet in  
 Israel, till John the Baptist; and therefore  
 there could be no new and clearer revelations  
 made of Christ in this time: And this re-  
 straining the spirit of prophecy, during that  
 interval, was for very wise ends of God, all  
 providence. For this took away all ground of  
 suspicion and apprehensions of any temporal  
 designs. Had the spirit of prophecy conti-  
 nued without this interruption to the very  
 time of his coming, this might have raised a  
 jealousy in the world; especially in after-ages,  
 that prophecies might have been calculated  
 for events, out of design or cunning; that  
 things meerly contingent in appearance might  
 have been contrived so, as to correspond and  
 answer the predictions; but at the distance of  
 near five hundred years, every thing of this  
 nature was altogether impracticable.

Besides, the wisdom of God thought fit to  
 leave this interval without any immediate re-  
 velations, that the world might ruminate upon  
 all



all those prophecies which had been already given; that men might weigh, and consider, and compare them one with another; which they accordingly did, and it had these visible effects upon the world. That the Jewish doctors and wise men, who supplied the place of the prophets during this space, being yet unprejudiced, interpreted all these prophecies of the Messiah promised from the beginning of the world. The ancient Jews understood those very passages of Christ, before his coming into the world; which the more modern, out of inveterate prejudice and interest, wrest and distort; and give them any turn or aspect from what they were originally designed for; which inconsistency with themselves in their manner of interpreting scripture, before and after Christ's coming, is so plain an argument against them that they stand self-condemned; and it shews their infidelity to be the effect of obstinacy and prejudice. It was this computation of Daniel's seventy weeks, that made the expectation of a Messiah so rise in the world at the time he came; which could never have been if the Jews had not in this interval interpreted it, after the manner of scripture, of a day for a year; and yet now that he is come, they will have it a day for ten years; or a hundred years; and others every day for a jubilee (Huet. dem. Evang. p. 449.)

Now upon the ceasing of prophecy it was, that their cabala or traditionary doctrine began

SERM. gan to take place ; which the Jews themselves  
 VIII. held not to differ in substance from the writ-  
 { ten word ; and was only a more distinct and  
 full explanation of what was obscurely con-  
 tained in the written word ; it was only what  
 was drawn out from thence by deduction and  
 inference : And this was done by their wise  
 men to that degree, that they had not only  
 a more full and comprehensive notion of the  
 coming of that great deliverer, by comparing  
 all the prophecies together, than ever men had  
 in any age before ; but they were by this search  
 only of human industry led into the know-  
 ledge of several doctrines preparatory to chris-  
 tianity ; and particularly the doctrine of the  
 resurrection and future rewards ; insomuch  
 that it supported the minds of those zealous  
 Jews, who suffered so much in this interval for  
 the cause of their religion, which sufferings  
 they would never have undergone, were it not  
 for the prospect they conceived of a reward  
 in another life.

This prophecy of Daniel's was so clear for  
 the particular time of the coming of the Mes-  
 siah, that there was a general expectation of  
 him in the world, not only among the Jews,  
 but among all the eastern nations. And now  
 we see the reason why God suffered the Jews  
 to be carried away captive, that they might  
 spread this doctrine of the coming of the  
 Messiah through the world ; insomuch that  
 it reached as far as China, as Huetius ob-  
 serves

serves from an express passage extracted out of SERM.  
the second book of Confutius the Chinese VIII.  
philosopher, who lived about five hundred years before Christ; and from the fourth book of Martinius's history of the Chinese. (Huet. dem. Evang. p. 390.) The ten tribes were carried into perpetual banishment; but there was a return of the captivity of Judah, because from thence the Messiah was to descend, and in this tribe all the prophecies to be fulfilled; and it was necessary to keep up a visible face of Church and civil government till he came; which God however suffered to be so miserably shattered and broken, that they might look for the coming of the Messiah with the more impatience; which they accordingly did: They reserved all their doubts to be solved when he came; they appealed to his coming in all their disputes; this was the great topick from whence they drew an argument of comfort in all their sufferings; they *waited for the consolation of Israel*; so that it was a solemn form of an oath to *swear by the consolation of Israel*: And let me not see the consolation of Israel, was a heavy curse. (Lightfoot) And this expectation at that time was the very cause of that rebellion of the Jews, which brought the destruction foretold upon them; their believing firmly that the Messiah was to come about that very time, was the immediate occasion of that dreadful punishment upon them for their infidelity when he was come.

Thus





Thus are we come down to the fulness of time, or consummation of the ages. And now after this long intermission, a prophet, who was himself prophesied of before, was sent to point out this great deliverer, and declare the very man. He by immediate inspiration discerned the person before he saw the prophecies fulfilled in him; John was become very popular, and yet would not assume to himself the title of the Messiah, though at the very juncture he was to come; which he certainly would have done, if he designed any worldly ends, or was prompted by ambition and vanity: But instead of this, Luke iii. 15. as the people were musing in their hearts *of John, whether he were the Christ or not*, he utterly rejects it, and singles out a person of mean appearance, and as yet not known in the world, *the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose*. This, together with those confessions which were made of him in his infancy, both by Jews and Heathens, is a demonstration of the divinity of his mission, which nothing but the truth was capable of, nor did error ever pretend to it.

It being thus manifest that the expectation of this great deliverer was the great concernment of the world from the beginning, and that all the prophecies relating to him were but so many renewals of the great covenant made with all mankind in him, as there is in  
truth

truth but one covenant between God and man, SERM.  
though gradually revealed at different times, VIII.  
and in a different manner, the consequence  
is easy and natural; namely, that the death  
and sufferings of Christ had respect to all that  
preceded, as well as to all that succeeded him.  
It is evident that none who lived before Christ  
could receive any benefit by his coming into  
the world, upon the Socinian principles; he  
could not come to ratify and confirm the pro-  
mises of God to them; nor to reveal his will  
to them, and bring life and immortality to  
light; nor to be an example of sufferings and  
a holy life; nor for any other whatsoever,  
proposed by the Socinians; so that if the death  
of Christ had any respect at all to them it must  
be from the real virtue and efficacy of his  
blood, to make atonement with God, and  
procure them pardon and reconciliation; and  
for men to affirm that it had no respect at all  
to those, to whom he was revealed and pro-  
mised; whose great concern it was to receive,  
and believe, and preserve all the prophecies re-  
lating to his coming; and the substance of  
whose religion was to typify and represent  
him, is to oppose the strongest reason and  
clearest evidence; because it is plain and ob-  
vious, the consequence is so natural and easy,  
that it will dissipate and confound all their  
niceties, and leave those men of sophism  
without a plain excuse, when they come to  
be tried for their infidelity.

The

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the Serpent, was from the beginning; and consequently the virtue and power of the promised seed to overcome it; who took upon him flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil; Heb. ii. 14. and who verse 16. is said to take on him the seed of Abraham, in opposition to the nature of Angels, to convince us that he died for that whole nature of man which he did take upon him. 1 Tim. ii. 5. it is said there is but one mediator between God and man; from whence it is plain that man cannot come to God but by a mediator; and that is, we read, the man Christ Jesus, who caused St. John, when a babe, to leap in the womb; of which rejoicing there could be no cause, but what he himself afterwards declares; John i. 19. *behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.*

All the prophecies made of Christ were given by way of comfort and encouragement to those who received them; and if it be allowed that they were from God, they must surely have been believed by those to whom they were made; and if they were believed, this must have been for some purpose or other, for otherwise they might as well have disbelieved, and that end or purpose must have been some benefit or advantage that was to accrue to them from this great person whenever he came; and this benefit could be nothing



thing else with respect to them, but the washing away the guilt of their sins by the virtue of his blood, and working atonement and reconciliation for them by the mighty power and efficacy of that death which he was to suffer. It is certain their faith and trust in this great deliverer to come, could not be so clear and firm as that of those who came after him, who see all the prophecies actually fulfilled; and therefore not so necessary a condition of salvation, but the bare expectation of him was sufficient to entitle them to a share in the hidden virtue of his death; which is the case of those heathens now, who though they never heard of Christ, yet by living up to the dictates of reason, and natural conscience, may obtain mercy through the power and efficacy of that blood, which they never had the opportunity of hearing of.

Having thus shewn how much this great deliverer promised in the beginning was the great concernment of all ages of the world, I shall now proceed to the second thing I proposed to speak to from the text; namely,

2. As far as our shallow capacity can fathom the depths of the wisdom of God, to consider some of the reasons why the coming of Christ into the world was deferred so long, about 4000 years; and why he appeared at the time he did.

1. Accordingly one plain reason of this wondrous dispensation is, that the divinity of his doctrine and mission might come recom-

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VIII.

mended to mankind with such demonstration and evidence as we were not capable of without it. Had Christ, this great deliverer, been born the second man into the world, (as is thought to have been the expectation of Eve) and had he died when Abel did, who was the first type of him, there could have been no proof or evidence of it conveyed down to posterity; nothing but the bare relation of it; and that too by tradition only through many generations, none of the dispensations of God by mankind being committed to writing before the days of Moses: It is true had he wrought miracles at that time, for a proof of his divinity and mission, they might have been conveyed down to us in gross; but they must have been such as served only for amusement, and not such as they really were, for the immediate benefit of men: Where were then the blind and the lame, the deaf and dumb to be healed with a word? Where were the unclean spirits to be dispossessed? And the thousands to be fed with a small quantity of food? Where were the witnesses of all these things? Where were the disciples to disperse his doctrine, and the many nations to receive it; without which it must have been lost to all succeeding generations? If it be said that the world was well enough peopled for all this, long before his coming; I answer that, had he come any time before the flood, we had wanted all those particulars, with persons  
names

names and minute circumstances of his life and miracles, which give the Gospel invincible strength and force; since it could have been conveyed down by tradition only; and that through one family, that of Noah. And we are to consider, that it was long before the habitual sins of men had increased our original corruption and deformity to that degree, as to have such infirmities so common in the world, as we find they were in our Saviour's time; in all probability not before the flood, when the term of life was so long.

Besides, miracles though they are a mighty conviction to those who see them, yet they are not of equal force and influence upon those who do not see them; and they are a proof the Devil hath endeavoured to counterfeit. But it was fit that the salvation of man by the sufferings of a divine person should have such proof as no other religion could have or pretend to; the greatest that man could receive from God; a proof that could not be counterfeited; and which should be of equal force and strength to all generations of men; and that could be no other than what we have; namely, a continued series of predictions for many ages together, from the beginning of the world to the fulness of time; in so much that the expectation and symbolizing of Christ was the substance of all the religion of men from the beginning of the world. The numberless prophecies relating to him were not picked out here and there out of all



SERM. the world, as many as could be found to qua-  
 VIII. drate in one man, but in one continued line  
 and people from whom he was to descend;  
 which were by a particular providence al-  
 lowed by the Jews to refer to him and his  
 coming before he came, though they were by  
 inveterate prejudice wrested to other meanings  
 afterwards: Nay their whole intire institution  
 of religion was exactly calculated for the re-  
 presentation of him and his coming; and had  
 a reference to him in all its parts. By this  
 means, the knowledge of this great deliverer  
 cleared up more and more in every age; thus  
 that sun of righteousness who sprang *from on  
 high, from the father of lights*, did not break  
 out of a sudden; to dazzle and confound the  
 reason of men; but rose at first with a twi-  
 light or dawning, and from thence proceeded  
 by insensible degrees, till it advanced into a  
 perfect day, into the glorious sunshine of the  
 gospel.

The greatest and most invincible *testimony*  
 of Jesus Christ is *the spirit of prophecy*, which  
 we had been utterly deprived of, if the coming  
 of Christ had been placed in the earlier ages  
 of the world; we had wanted all those types  
 and predictions which God *hath spoken by the  
 mouth of all his holy Prophets, ever since the  
 world began*; which are all plainly but one  
 continued dispensation of God to mankind;  
 so that christianity is the substance and per-  
 fection of all that ever was revealed to man,  
 or suggested by the light of nature. And this  
 is

is the meaning of St. Paul in Eph. i. 10. where speaking of the redemption we have through the blood of Christ, he observes that the intent and design of God in making known this mystery of his will was, *that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth*; which is not meant only of the union of the Jews and Gentiles, of which there is not one word in all that chapter; but the words have a farther emphasis, namely, that God in his own appointed time might shew how all things did center in this one great comprehensive mystery of a crucified Saviour; the words of the original are very expressive, εἰς οἰκονομίαν τῆ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, in the œconomy of the fulness of the seasons, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι to sum up all in him; to collect all the divine providences and revelations from the foundation of the world into one system, every part whereof hath a direct tendency to him; of all things both in heaven and earth; i. e. all the eternal councils and purposes of God, together with the imperfect revelation of them here in this world; as also the full consummation and clear manifestation in Heaven of all those glorious mysteries, which are here represented to us by imperfect resemblance and analogy.

Thus we see this delaying of his coming so long gives us such a proof of the divine doctrine and mission of Christ, as is not possible for men of any other religion to have, all

SERM. their histories being so late ; and it is the scrip-  
 VIII. tures alone which acquaint us with the transac-  
 } tions of providence, in a continued chain from  
 the first creation of man. This is what St. Paul calls the demonstration of the spirit, in opposition to the wisdom of this world, 1 Cor. ii. 4. by which is meant the proof of the things relating to a crucified Saviour out of the books of the old testament, the most ancient records in the world ; and particularly out of the prophets, who spoke by inspiration of the spirit ; this is what he calls verse 13. *the comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* For upon comparing the completions with the predictions, there will be found a perfect harmony and consistence between them. The more a man searches, as St. Paul advises, Rom. xvi. 29. the more he will be convinced, and pleased, and satisfied ; For it is such a proof that not only no other religion, but no art or science can pretend to ; and if people do not see and feel the force of it, it is for the same reason they may be ignorant of any other sort of knowledge, because they do not attend and give their mind to it ; and turn their thoughts that way ; because they will not *compare spiritual things with spiritual*, and *search the scriptures whether these things are so or no.* Though this gives all the reasonings of the New Testament the force of demonstration, yet the natural man, verse 14. *receiveth not the things of the spirit ;* that is, the



the man who proceeds barely upon principles of natural reason, without regard to these types and predictions, *neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* But he that is spiritual, i. e. he that argues from those records which contain the predictions of the spirit, from the foundation of the world, *he judgeth all things*; he sees the invincible force of these proofs, and *he himself is judged of no man*; i. e. he can never be confuted by any who proceed upon different principles, because the nature of those arguments drawn from prophecies and the continued series of God's dispensations from the beginning of the world, is such, that they admit of no answer: And therefore, it is no wonder St. Paul undervalues all knowledge in comparison of this; and in a professed opposition to all the boasted learning and eloquence of the Greeks should say, that he determined *not to know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

It is upon this Christ lays the stress of his arguing with the Jews, John v. 39. *search the scriptures—they are they which testify of me*; and it is observable, that verse 36. when he appeals to his miracles he says, *the works which the father hath given me to finish, the same bear witness of me.* i. e. the works that were long before foretold that he should do, which gave them a double force, and rendered them irresistible; for they did not only carry in them a present evidence from a su-

SERM. pernatural operation, but they received an additional force from their being a completion of the predictions relating to him; namely, that he should do those very works when he came. And therefore it is that he says, Luke xvi. 31. *if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* His own rising from the dead, though it might convince them that he came from God, yet if they did not believe the prophecies which foretold this, even that nor any other miracle he wrought would be a direct and immediate proof, that he was that great prophet and deliverer of mankind which was to come into the world: It would prove this only indirectly, as they were an evidence of the truth of what he said of himself.

I might add to all this, that had it not been for this wise dispensation of God in deferring the coming of Christ into the world, it would have been impossible for men to have had any written system of the laws of God, which should carry in them a plain and undoubted proof of their divinity. 2 Tim. iii. 16. It is said, *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*; and the way it appears to have been so, is by comparing the two testaments with one another: They mutually prove each other by the exact agreement and correspondence between that series of prophecies from the beginning of the world, and the completion of them in the new testament; and did they  
want

want this proof, there could be no other in-  
fallible character or stamp of their divinity to  
all generations of men. And thus we see the  
coming of Christ into the world was deferred  
so long, that the world might have the greatest  
proof and evidence of his divine mission and  
doctrine, that God could give, or mankind  
was capable of receiving. This happened  
soon after the death of Adam; the dissolu-  
tion of the body was a new and surprising  
thing to the race of Adam and Eve; and  
when men saw not only other instances of  
this, but their common parents, who  
were created immediately by God, sink into  
stench and rottenness, it was natural for them  
to distrust that promise of a deliverer, and to  
think there was no future state. And there-  
fore this taking of Enoch alive up into heaven  
in an exemplary manner, as no doubt it was,  
was a seasonable instruction to mankind, that  
that first promise of a Saviour was not from  
any temporal death or misery; and that it  
referred to the deliverance of the body as well  
as the soul.

2. But secondly, we are to consider that the  
incarnation of the son of God, the end and  
design of his coming into the world to suffer  
for the sins of men, and to atone the justice  
of God, is a great mystery. Mankind is not  
capable of any direct and immediate know-  
ledge of the divine nature of Christ; nor of the  
true nature of that justice which was to be a-  
toned; nor of the real manner of appeasing  
the

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SERM. the wrath of God, and reconciling infinite  
 VIII. goodness to sinful men: These things are in  
 their own nature inconceivable to us in this  
 world; we are not capable of the least glimpse  
 of any direct and immediate knowledge of  
 them as they are in themselves. How then  
 must they be revealed to mankind? This  
 could be no other way than by such words  
 and notions as are first received and under-  
 stood among men. How could he be called  
 our king before any other form of govern-  
 ment was known, than that of the father of  
 a family; which was no such apt analogy to  
 represent to us the spiritual kingdom of Christ,  
 by which he ruleth over all? How could he  
 be called our High Priest, till after there had  
 been such a solemn office appointed for the  
 worship of God; and that the name became  
 known and familiar, by long succession of  
 that office among men? Nor could the insti-  
 tution of this be, till the right of priesthood  
 ceased in the first born, which was not till  
 about the time of Moses. How could he  
 have been called the Messiah or anointed, till  
 the ceremony of anointing persons to the of-  
 fices of king and priest was appointed by  
 God, and become a received practice among  
 men? Thus he is declared to be the lamb of  
 God that takes away the sins of the world;  
 and how should this have been understood  
 were it not for the institution of the passover,  
 and appointment of a lamb for a daily offering  
 in

in the temple? When it is said that he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; how could we have any notion of this were it not for that custom of appeasing God by slaying of beasts, which prevailed universally in the world till he came? which is a lively analogy to represent his substitution in our stead, and the virtue of his blood for appeasing the wrath of God. Nay we had not known the meaning of the word *λόγος*, that name so peculiar to Christ, if he had been sent into the world before he was promised: Since one great reason of the name is, because he was the word or promise of God to mankind. And that very appellation of the son of God would have been surely mistaken had he come at first, for he would have passed for the son of God, as Adam was, by creation, and not by an eternal and ineffable generation.

Thus we might run through the whole style of the New Testament, and shew how our manner of thinking and speaking of him could have been no otherwise than from such words and conceptions as required a long time, nay many ages to render them intelligible and familiar. From whence we see the real use and absolute necessity of all those types and prophecies, which were not only mere predictions of the coming of the son of God in the flesh; but they were in truth actual revelations of the great mystery of salvation in him; and it was not possible to reveal it all at once; we could come to the knowledge

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knowledge of it no otherwise than by similitude and resemblance ; by allusion and comparison ; and by the aptest analogy this world could afford to represent the truth and substance of what is reserved to be the object of our understandings in another world. It is by this means that the wisdom of God hath let down this great mystery to the infirmity of man ; so that by a succession of types, and shadows, and prophecies through many ages the world was enabled to speak and think of what was otherwise unconceivable and unutterable : And thus by these patterns of the things in the heavens, we attain to a good degree of knowledge of the heavenly things themselves.

3. Another reason of our Saviour's coming into the world being so long deferred may be, because perhaps there never was in any Age of the world before, a juncture of such obstinate superstition and inveterate blindness among men, which should prompt them to that barbarous treatment of one not only of their own nation, of such unspotted innocence, and so inoffensive in his whole deportment ; but who wrought such miracles among them ; and particularly in the most endearing instance, that of healing all manner of diseases. This will appear no improbable conjecture, if we consider those emphatical expressions of our Saviour's calling them *a wicked generation, a generation of vipers* ; and affirming solemnly *that it should be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for them* ;  
and




and withal how sharply he taxes them with SERM.  
blindness, and superstition, and hypocrisy. VIII.  
The wickedness of men since the flood had  
by this time arriven to its greatest height, as  
it happened in much the same space before  
the flood. The power of the Devil was great  
among men, and his kingdom was then at its  
crisis : The whole heathen world was over-  
run with idolatry ; and the Jews had not on-  
ly miserably corrupted their ceremonial law to  
superstition, but had almost put out the light  
of nature, so that this was their hour and the  
power of darkness.

It was absolutely necessary that Christ should  
meet with such usage, and that he should die for  
the sins of men ; and it was as necessary that  
this should be brought about in a way agree-  
able both to the goodness and justice of God,  
and to the free-will of man ; not by con-  
straint or necessity, or any forcible impulse up-  
on the spirits of men, but his death and suf-  
ferings must have been the result and conse-  
quence of their own wickedness and wilful  
depravation of themselves. Their blindness  
must have proceeded from a mist of their own  
raising, and not by any actual infatuation  
from God ; any otherwise than the withdraw-  
ing his grace in proportion to their demerit.  
It was necessary for Christ to manifest the  
greatest goodness, and yet meet with the highest  
wickedness and impiety ; he must have given  
no provocation, and yet meet with implaca-  
ble hatred and inveteracy ; it was necessary  
for

SERM. for him to shine with the glorious light of his  
 VIII. doctrine, and yet meet with obstinate blindness;  
 he must have wrought the greatest miracles, and they must have been received with blasphemy and infidelity; and it was absolutely necessary that he should never have been guilty of one sin, and yet that he should die like a malefactor. The timing of these inconsistencies, so as that they should work together to that one great end, the redemption of mankind, required no less than infinite wisdom. The severe character our Saviour gives of that people, seems to be a plain indication of the reason why he was born at that time, and among those people from whom there was the least prospect of success. There is not any place in Scripture branded with so black a character of infamy and wickedness as Sodom; and yet he affirms, *Matth. xi. 23.* that if the mighty works that were done among the Jews, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day.

It may be objected that the Heathen used his disciples and the preachers of the Gospel after the same manner the Jews used him. 'Tis true; but we are to consider that the preaching of the Gospel overturned their whole religion being founded upon idolatry; but Christ allow'd the religion of the Jews; he lived in it, and performed their whole law, he allowed the authority of Moses, and appealed to his writings, and declared he did not come to destroy but to fulfil.

And

And now we see the reason why those types SERM.  
 and prophecies of Christ were not so full and VIII.  
 circumstantial, as that every one that saw   
 him when he came should immediately know  
 and acknowledge him; instead of making  
 this obscurity of the predictions an objection  
 against the divinity of them, as some do,  
 who ask if God had pleased could he not  
 have given plainer revelations and clearer pro-  
 phecies? Instead of this, we ought to admire  
 the wisdom of God in this contrivance; for  
 had Christ been so plainly revealed before he  
 came, how could he have suffered? and then  
 how could our sins have been atoned for?  
 The revelations concerning him were so plain,  
 that had they been plainer he could not have  
 been put to death. God in his wisdom or-  
 dered it so, that the prophecies should be gra-  
 dually fulfilled in him; and should not be  
 compleated till after his crucifixion, as he him-  
 self intimated in his last expiring words, *It is*  
*finished.* So that their infidelity who crucified  
 him was in some degree pitiable before; which  
 is the reason of that prayer of his for them on  
 the cross, *father, forgive them, they know not*  
*what they do.* But when all was finished up-  
 on the cross, then infidelity became utterly  
 inexcusable.

And this doth naturally and easily account  
 for those several expressions of our Saviour in  
 the Gospel, which seem to have some difficul-  
 ty in them, as being inconsistent with his  
 main design; namely, where he forbids the  
 blind,



SERM. blind, the dumb, and the leper to publish  
 VIII. the miraculous cures that he wrought upon  
 them, and where he gives directions to his  
 disciples to conceal him and his works. The  
 reason is plain, because that too full and ge-  
 neral a conviction would have been a means  
 of preventing the great end of his coming into  
 the world, to suffer for the sins of men. Ac-  
 cordingly *Matth.* xvi. 20. where it is said that  
 he charged his disciples that they should tell  
 no man that he was Jesus the Christ, it im-  
 mediately follows, that from that time forth  
 he began to shew his disciples how that he  
 must suffer many things of the Elders, and  
 chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed. And  
 in *Mark* ix. 9. when his three disciples had  
 seen his glorious transfiguration in the mount,  
 as they came down from it, he chargeth them  
 they should tell no man what things they had  
 seen, (i. e.) as it immediately follows, till the  
 son of man were risen from the dead: This  
 might have been a means of his not being put  
 to death. Had they been as industrious in  
 publishing him and his miracles before his  
 crucifixion as they were afterwards, they  
 would have laboured only to defeat the great  
 end of his coming into the world. Thus you  
 see with what wisdom the descent of the Ho-  
 ly Ghost upon them was timed, not till after  
 his ascension into Heaven. For had it been  
 given sooner, the consequence of all that  
 mighty force of eloquence and persuasion  
 would have been the convincing the Princes

of this world that he was the true Messiah, SERM. VIII.  
 and *had they known* this, St. Paul tells us  
 exprefly, 1 Cor. ii. 8. *they would not have cru-*  
*cified the Lord of glory.* }

4. The time of Chrift's coming into the world appeared to the wisdom of God to be the fulnefs of time, and confummation of the ages, becaufe the laft of the great monarchies of the Earth was then at its greateft height; which was fo nicely and exactly timed, that he was born in the third or fourth year after the temple of Janus was fhut by Auguftus; from which time till the latter end of that Emperor's days, there was an univerfal peace all over the world; which fpace may well be computed the utmoft fplendor and glory of the Roman government. For though there was no great and vifible declenfion of it till fome years after; yet I think we may reckon the firft turn of the fate of that Empire from the fedition of the Athenians, and the commotion of the Daci, which opened the temple of Janus again in the latter end of Auguftus's days.

Now that it fhould be thus, we are to confider that the firft promife of Chrift was that he fhould break the Serpent's head, i. e. deliver mankind from that dominion the Serpent had gained over them, and reftore them to what they had loft by a powerful and high hand. He was ever prophecied of as a mighty Prince and Deliverer, and looked for and expected as fuch. When he came, *Revel.*

SERM. xi. 15. *the kingdoms of this world were to be-*  
 VIII. *come the kingdoms of our Lord and of his*

*Christ, and he was to reign for ever and ever. This is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold: By the iron is meant the Roman Empire, which conquered all the rest; and was to be it self destroyed by the kingdom of the Messiah, which was to succeed it, as Daniel explains it, ii. 44. In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

'Tis true indeed that those were temporal kingdoms, and that our Saviour's kingdom was not of this world; but it is plain that the sway and mighty influence of his doctrine and spirit in the world is always spoke of under the notion of a kingdom; and it is the liveliest emblem by which it can be represented to us: And whatsoever other reason there was for this spiritual kingdom's succeeding the greatest monarchy in the secret councils of God, yet we find this in fact true, that that Empire dissolved and broke into pieces as christianity prevailed; and that all attempts that have been made ever since for universal monarchy have been defeated; and in all likelihood will ever be so by whomsoever it is attempted.

There



There are other reasons why the height of SERM.  
VIII.  
 that monarchy was a proper juncture for the  
 appearing of Christ. The largeness of the  
 Roman dominions, they extending to most  
 parts of the world, gave opportunity for an  
 universal correspondence; by which means  
 the Gospel could be in a shorter time spread  
 over all nations; which was much forwarded  
 and promoted by the general peace in those  
 days. For, as Orosius observes (lib. 7. cap. 3.  
 Hueti. p. 431.) *et si sub extremis Cæsaris tem-  
 poribus apertus est Janus, tamen per multa ex  
 eo tempora, quamvis in procinctu esset exercitus,  
 nulla bella sonuerunt*; he means from the  
 time that Vespasian shut the temple of Janus,  
 after the war with the Jews and destruction  
 of their city.

Besides, it was agreeable to the wisdom of  
 God to leave time for the reason of man to ar-  
 rive at the greatest improvement it was ca-  
 pable of, before he would manifest his divine  
 revelations to the world; and accordingly  
 learning and arts were refined and advanced  
 to a greater height at that time than ever they  
 were before. The understandings of men  
 were cultivated and improved to that degree,  
 that the books written about that time are  
 the standards for good sense and language to  
 this day; which is to all succeeding genera-  
 tions, an invincible argument that it was not  
 in the understanding and wit of man to at-  
 tain to the knowledge of those mysteries which  
 we could have no other way than by revela-

SERM. tion from God ; and that the most exalted  
 VIII. strains of human reason could never arrive at  
 the pitch of evangelical holiness.

6. Another reason why Christ was born no sooner into the world may be, because perhaps there was not in all the race of women till that time so excellent a person as the Virgin Mary ; which we shall be the rather inclined to believe, if we consider that in the genealogy of Joseph, who was of the same family, reckoned up by St. Matthew, there are but four women named, and every one of those noted for some infamy ; as Tamar for incest, Rahab for being a harlot, Ruth for heathenism, and Bathsheba for adultery. This great deliverer was to be the seed of the woman only, and therefore it is reasonable to think he should spring from the most accomplished of the whole race ; especially since by being chosen an instrument of our deliverance, she seems to be set in a sort of opposition to her by whom we fell. *Luke xi. 27.* a woman in the Gospel cries out, *blest is the womb that bare thee ; and the paps which thou hast sucked,* which Christ does not gainsay, but says, *yea rather blest are they which hear the word of God and keep it ;* which blessing she had a title to in an eminent degree : For undoubtedly, though the lowness of her condition in the world did not admit of any pompous piety or popular virtue ; yet her modesty, and devotion, and humility, and Chastity, and all the other hidden graces of her soul

foul were such as distinguished her in the eyes of God from the rest of her sex. And the reason why there is so little notice taken of her in the Gospel, and that our Saviour seems to treat her with so much indifference was, because the wisdom of God foresaw, that a race of men would arise who should abuse that just esteem we ought to have for her, to the grossest superstition and idolatry. Now whether this conjecture will bear, or no; yet it must be acknowledged that it no way exceeds that great regard and veneration we all owe to the memory of her, who with good reason could say of herself, *that from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*

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VIII.

Though I have detained you thus long, yet I cannot avoid observing to you the great end and design of God in singling out a particular family from the rest of the world, the posterity of Abraham, to renew the covenant made with all mankind from the beginning, because he was in the direct line from whence Christ was to descend. We are not to entertain such narrow thoughts of this dispensation as if it were for their sakes alone, and as if God had no regard to the rest of the world in what was transacted with them. It was the common concernment of mankind, and only a farther revelation of the promise of a deliverer made to our first parents. There are instances in Scripture of true worshippers of God in other nations, and in all likelihood there were remarkable providences among



SERM.

VIII.



them, though not so necessary for mankind to have them recorded. But without the records of those particular providences which were vouchsafed in that line, and among those people from whom he was to descend, this great deliverer could never have been pointed out to the world so plainly, nor could he have appeared in the world with such invincible proof and evidence of his divine mission and doctrine; no; nor could we have understood those divine revelations when he came, nor could the world have known how to think or speak of them; therefore it was absolutely necessary the records of that family should have been preserved and conveyed down to posterity for those great and necessary purposes. And for the same reason it was by a particular providence that the descent of Abraham from Adam was preserved; and that afterwards an exact account of the genealogies of their families was so religiously observed, and in so great request among his posterity, which served to manifest to the world the completion of all the prophecies relating to Christ, and particularly to shew how he was the seed of that very woman to whom the first promise of him was made. The whole intent and design of that sort of knowledge ended with his birth, it became insignificant and lost its use, and therefore the continuation of it is condemned by St. Paul, *Titus* iii. 9. *but avoid foolish questions and genealogies*, and this in the same sentence wherein he forbids contentions

tentions and strivings about the law, and S E R M.  
 both for the same reason, because both of VIII.  
 them have lost their use, *they are unprofitable*  
*and vain,*

There is yet a farther account to be given of this wondrous dispensation, which I have not time to pursue; and therefore I shall only observe here, that if the timing of our Saviour's coming into the world appears thus reasonable, even to the eye of an human understanding, what must be the weight of those reasons which are yet unveiled in the secret councils of God? What we see is a sufficient argument of a profound humility and submission to his revelations, and especially to this great mystery of the salvation of man by the incarnation and sufferings of the son of God, though we are not able to account for all the difficulties that may be started with relation to it; and particularly for *the times and the seasons which the father hath put in his own power*. The time will come when these secret things of God will be disclosed, and then we shall be convinced that Christ came into the world at that juncture, when it was most for the benefit and advantage of mankind that he should do so. In the mean time with all resignation let us cry out with St. Paul, *O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

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# S E R M O N IX.

On the agony of Christ.

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MATH. xxvi. 38.

*Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*

SERM.  
IX.

**I**N the great and complicated mystery of our redemption by a crucified Saviour, no part is more mysterious than the true nature and extent of his sufferings; and the want of considering them as a mystery, and allowing that we are able neither to conceive nor express them, hath been the occasion of undue apprehensions concerning the sufferings of Christ. Notions of these in the minds of men that are too scanty and limited have raised some of the strongest prejudices against Christianity; and have given Socinians and Infidels such advantages against us, as they think we are not able to get over. What it is for a man to be treated ignominiously, to be the scorn and derision of men, and then



to undergo the pains of scourging and crucifixion is easy to apprehend; and when we reflect upon the sufferings of our Saviour, we are apt to think of him as we would of ourselves, or any one else under the like external circumstances. It is very natural for the thoughts of men to stop here, because these are the things that fall within our sphere of suffering, and for which our nature hath the greatest abhorrence; the sense of these things touches us most feelingly, and it is no wonder we are not so much affected with what we have no capacities either to know or feel. It is true the consideration and belief of these only have been, and are sufficient to answer all the ends of a christian faith, and practical holiness: But since the holy scriptures have plain indications of greater degrees of sufferings, and left room and encouragement for a farther contemplation of them; and since the objections and prejudices against Christ himself, and the satisfaction of his sufferings, have in a great degree made it necessary, I shall endeavour to enlarge our minds upon this subject; that we may be sensible that as he suffered all that man could suffer under the like treatment, so likewise he suffered beyond this, both in nature and degree, what no meer man could suffer; that we may have a full conviction that the sufferings of Christ were not only very great, but much greater than any one else could suffer; and not only so but  
that

SERM.

IX.

SERM. that in truth and reality they were much  
 IX. greater than we are able to comprehend or  
 imagine.

But before I speak particularly to that part of Christ's sufferings which is mysterious, I shall consider that part of them which we best comprehend; and they are these two, the sense of pain in his body, and of shame in his mind.

1. As to the pains of his body, they were all that man could feel or undergo in the like condition; for as he received a human body, so he made himself liable and yielded to all its natural infirmities; the strokes of the scourges, the piercing of the nails through his hands and feet, caused most acute and pungent pains; the *iron entred into his soul*, and he laboured under the pangs and agonies of death: Thus far he suffered in his body all that the thieves underwent that were crucified with him; and it is an argument of infinite love that he endured it.

But if we consider a little farther, we may probably find it very agreeable to reason, that there was something even in this part of our Saviour's sufferings peculiar to him, and which no one else was capable of. He had no sin in him either original or actual, and was at the time of his death in a state of perfect innocence; so that though he had a feeling of our infirmities, yet we cannot well think that he had those infirmities that were the natural result of moral corruptions. The frame  
 and


and temper of his body, and the firmness of SER M.  
that union between all the parts of it, must IX.  
have been infinitely beyond that of the loose  
and crazy disposition of the most healthy  
and athletick constitution among men.

I mean no more than that he had the same excellent harmony of all his parts, that put it in the power of our first parents to live without sin, and would have rendered them immortal; and if so, we may easily imagine how much greater pain and torture it must be for a soul and body, thus firmly united, to be torn asunder; than for a soul to leave a body, to which it doth by nature, even at the best, sit very loose; and is daily rendered much more so, by frequent contracted infirmities: Insomuch that at the approach of death they are often linked but by a thread, and the soul is disengaged with a very little reluctance of the body.

The only objection of any force that lies here is this; namely, that though Christ was not subject to any of our moral infirmities, yet he was subject to all those that were natural, and therefore could not have that perfect constitution of body. But that he had a perfect constitution of soul, I believe will be readily allowed; and likewise that he had no contracted infirmities in his body; and therefore what I have been saying is at least in a great degree true; for a perfect constitution of body is necessary in order to an exact  
and



SERM. and regular temper of soul; And then as to

IX.  what remains beyond this it will appear yet more probable, if it be considered that all that Christ suffered and felt was not the necessary consequences of any infirmities or corruption in his nature, but by his own free submission, and voluntary yielding to it. He chose to suffer what he did, *being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death*; Philip. ii. 8. which if he had not willingly submitted to, he was not otherwise in a state or condition of death; the united force of men and devils could not have disordered the least part of his frame. *I lay down my life—no man takes it from me, but I lay it down of my self*; and to shew this, *he bowed his head* at the instant he was pleased to die, and *gave up the Ghost*, which otherwise could not have been wrested from him by any external violence whatsoever: And to make this the more evident, he resigned up his spirit sooner than he could have died in the course of nature; and *cried with a loud voice*, to shew he could have lived longer: Infomuch that the executioners brake not his legs as they did those of the thieves, finding him already dead; and Pilate marvelled to hear he was dead so soon.

In the best of men, the infirmities of the body, and the sense of guilt in many instances of their former life, makes the soul part with the body with little regret; and it often rejoices to throw it off, as a clog and weight  
that

that sinks it into sin and folly. But his spotless soul was torn from a body as pure and unspotted; that never had the least reluctance to a virtue, but assisted and promoted all its virtues and graces; which ever continued in a sweet compliance with all the glorious operations of the mind.

SERMON.  
IX.

It is true this is but conjecture, and I propose it as such; but it seems to be with some colour of reason, and those conjectures are very allowable where they promote the honour of God, and the greatness of our Saviour's love.

2. The other part of our Saviour's sufferings which we can best conceive, and have the liveliest apprehensions of, is that great sense of shame which attended the whole series of them. As Christ took on him a human soul, so he took likewise its passions and affections; and submitted himself to all those impressions it was liable to receive, either from outward objects, or from sad and perplexing reflections within. He was touched with *a feeling of our infirmities*, and *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*. Heb. iv. 15. He had a quick sense of disgrace, and felt the weight of lying under the imputation of guilt: Ignominy and shame in the mind is what pain is to the body, but that affects us in our immortal part, and is therefore the more grievous and intolerable; because if the guilt be real, and the imputation true, it is a blot upon our whole nature, and without repentance

SERM. penitance will follow us to another world; and  
IX. continue a stain for ever.

Those who have had the tryal, know what it is to be thought guilty of those sins, of which they have the greatest abhorrence. The wounds of calumny sink deep, and no one is sufficiently sensible of the smart but he that feels it. Racks and tortures are better born, for pains in the body can be overcome by the resolution of the mind; and the anguish of them is abated by a serenity and a consciousness of innocence: But when this is struck at, we are bereaved of our last refuge in this life, and can look no where but to another world for comfort. When men are guilty it provokes their rage at their accusers, and it raises their indignation that the world should think them so: Where there is most innocence there is the greatest modesty and ingenuity; and the more innocent a man is, the more sensibly he is touched with an imputation of guilt; the more it strikes inwardly and fixes upon his spirits; he takes it to heart; he mourns by himself, and his soul refuses comfort. It is true he at last finds consolation in appeals to God and another world; but till then he labours under the sorest affliction that can befall a good man; and it is easier for one to put off any thing to the day of judgment than the clearing of his innocence: Insomuch, that he who hath attained to that height of virtue, as with a calmness of spirit, and resignation of mind, to bear those false accusations,

or



or malicious suggestions of his enemies, which are not in his power to remove; in that man it may be said, that *patience hath had its perfect work*. SERM.  
IX.

Thus it was with our blessed Saviour, who, though he had no sin, yet was condemned under the odious character of a sinner and malefactor, he was made the scorn and derision of the people, a jest and a by-word; and felt all the grief and sorrow of heart, which any innocent man would have felt under the like ignominious and barbarous treatment; and not only so, but there were some things peculiar in this part of his sufferings, and which hath not been the case of any other person.

The greater abhorrence an innocent person hath to a vice, the more pungent is the sense of being thought guilty; as the most curious and delicate complexion is aptest to feel pain; so a mind in the most perfect state of innocence, is aptest to find resentment at the approach or imputation of guilt. Our Saviour had no sin, nor was there *guile found in his mouth*, yet laboured under the foulest aspersions: The greater indeed was his comfort, but then the anguish and trouble of his soul was proportionably greater. If any of us are falsely accused and slandered, we are guilty perhaps in some degree, or in other instances of sin; and either one way or the other, it is a punishment less than we deserve; we may say with the thief on the cross, *we receive the due*

S E R M. *due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done*  
 I X. *nothing amiss.*

Again, there never was, in the case of any person whatsoever, such a concurrence of circumstances of ignominy and contempt. His design appeared to them to be no less than changing the law of Moses, yet he passed for a vile impostor; he set up for no less than reforming the world, and yet was reputed to be wicked and immoral in his life, a friend to publicans and sinners: He appeared to the world as a person guilty of rebellion, sedition, and blasphemy; and this was not only currently reported and insinuated, but was countenanced and confirmed by the formality of a publick judicature: He went under the notion of a king, and aiming at the empire of the world, and yet had not where to lay his head: He gave himself out to be the son of God, and yet could not save himself from the cross; and in short, after all the great things that he gave out of himself, he was apprehended as a malefactor, and was accused, and condemned, and executed under the notion of the head and ring-leader of an ignorant and pestilent sect.

This is the character he bore from the generality of all ranks of people; and he was at last so despicable that no body would own him; his own disciples vowed they knew him not, and they treated him according to the opinion they had of him, after so very particular a manner, that there never was in the world

world such treatment : Other instances of execution were ever apt to raise some pity in men's minds, and among the most barbarous it was ever esteemed cruel and inhuman to mock and deride at persons going to suffer torments, no way by tumult or by any sudden commotion of a multitude, but in cool blood, and by a deliberate sentence : Yet in spite of nature they made sport with him ; set him up for a king, with a purple robe, and a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed for his scepter ; mocked him by *bowing the knee before him*, buffeting him, striking him, and then bidding him, as he was a prophet, guess who smote him : They spate in his face, and whilst he hung on the cross they shook their heads at him in derision, calling to him to come down and then they would believe him : And to fill up the measure of shame and infamy, as the prophet Isaiah foretold, they all *did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted* ; i. e. they were of opinion that all this was no other than the just judgment of God upon him, for his own guilt and offences.

In this condition he left the world, and there is one circumstance of this part of his sufferings, which rendered all this shame and disgrace yet more grievous and intolerable to that lover of souls ; and that is the lasting effects, and dreadful consequences of all that scandal and reproach to all succeeding ages, to the ruin of millions. Death will put an



SERM. end to all the injuries we receive in our bodies,

IX. but calumny descends to posterity, and sticks upon our name: There is an envy in man that sucks it in greedily, and they have a lust to propagate it; the breath of envy and malice continually blowing on the wounds of infamy, keep them always open, and they hardly ever close: And where they are most effectually healed, they leave a scarr and a deformity behind them; the most consummate holiness is not proof against the effects of it; and the most perfect innocence, when once it is sullied, never in this world shines in its full brightness and lustre; for few of those that are prejudiced are ever undeceived; and even in those that are, there remain some degrees of jealousy; even miracles cannot wholly wipe it off. Those scandals raised upon our Saviour, and his ignominious treatment, is a lasting offence, and a stumbling block to Jews and Heathen to this day; and even now he passes for a malefactor among them.

A man that, by open accusation or private slander, arraigns the innocence of another, doth not know what he is doing; he is acting the Devil's part, he is doing what can never thoroughly be undone till the day of judgment: For calumny flies out of sight, and can never be recalled but by the last trump. The reproaches cast upon our Saviour are at this day fresh in the minds and in the mouths of multitudes, and are an invincible prejudice against him and his doctrine. He foresaw all this,

this, and how that neither the unspotted innocence of his life, nor the excellency of his doctrine, nor the demonstration of his miracles would ever totally remove the prejudices of men arising from the load of infamy that was cast upon him: Undoubtedly the thoughts of this pierced his righteous soul, and it gave the shame he underwent unexpressible acuteness and pungency.

Now because slander and calumny seems to justify it self generally by being not altogether groundless, and without some foundation; I will only observe here, that there was a colour and shew for all the accusations of our Saviour; and a pretence for all the slanders cast upon him: Those are the most dangerous slanders that have some colour and pretence; and they have this accession of guilt beyond those that are wholly groundless and without any foundation, that the effects and consequences of them are more pernicious and lasting. The giving any man's words or actions a false gloss or wrong turn; and wresting them any way to his disadvantage, requires as much wickedness and more cunning than the inventing of something wholly new; and such slanders have nothing the less degree of the malice for having the subtilty of the Devil.

These are those instances of our Saviour's sufferings which we apprehend most clearly; and even in these we see there were circumstances peculiar to him, which rendered his sufferings much greater than those of any

SERM. meer man: And were there nothing beyond  
 IX. these, the worth and dignity of the person  
 who suffered them is sufficient to give them  
 infinite value, and a divine power and efficacy  
 for the remission of our sins. And accordingly  
 we must confess, that the Scriptures do in  
 more express terms attribute the work of our  
 redemption to these; the reason of which is  
 because we have the quickest sense and live-  
 liest apprehensions of this part of his sufferings;  
 they are the most obvious, and the likeliest to  
 affect and touch us; nor have we capacities  
 for a comprehension of the great extent of  
 them.

However there is sufficient ground and en-  
 couragement from scripture, to collect, that  
 the sufferings of our Saviour's mind were vastly  
 beyond either his bodily pains, or the shame  
 that attended them. These are not related  
 in scripture after a pathetick manner, nothing  
 but bare matter of fact; but when they men-  
 tion the inward sufferings of his mind, no  
 words can be more expressive: The words  
 used to express his agony in the garden, are  
*λυπεῖσθαι, ἀδημονεῖν, ἐκταμβεῖσθαι*; which signify the  
 greatest extremity of sorrow, and anxiety,  
 and consternation of mind. His soul was ex-  
 ceeding sorrowful, a sorrow like the pangs of  
 death; he had on him the greatest anguish  
 and confusion; and was struck with horror  
 and sore amazement. What could all this be  
 for; that he was to dye? death was to be the  
 end of all his sorrows, and an entrance into  
 glory;



glory; and if that were all, he had the same reason that all good men have had to rejoice that it was so near. He had as great resolution and constancy of mind, and was as well able to bear it as any one: He had as full a trust in God, and as great assurance of glory as those who triumphed in the flames; and accordingly he bore that part of his sufferings, that was common to men, with calmness and a quiet submission; *he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;* he did not make one complaint of their cruelty in the midst of his tortures; nor do we find that he uttered one groan at his being scourged, or at the nailing his feet and hands to the cross; and therefore the bare prospect of this at such a distance could not make him say, John xii. 27. *now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour;* and that should make him pray three times successively, *that if it were possible, that cup should pass from him.* Certainly there must have been cause for this more than is usually imagined; it must be something beyond this, when *fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and such a horrible dread had overtaken him.* It must have been that part of his sufferings which is unknown to us, that must have extorted all this from him: And accordingly it hath been the constant opinion and continued sense of the church, that the sufferings of Christ were unconceivable and unexpressible.

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And therefore I shall proceed to the consideration of that part of his sufferings which is mysterious; and since it is mystery, I shall treat of them as such, and distinguish between that part of them that we can form some conception of, and that other of which we can have no notion at all. The particulars I shall instance in are these:

I The deprivation and intermission of the divine presence.

II. The unsupportable load of the sins of mankind that he laboured under.

III. The prospect he then had of the eternal ruin and damnation of such multitudes of obstinate sinners, who should receive no advantage by what he suffered.

IV. The malicious injections of the spirits of darkness.

I. The first instance I shall give of that part of our Saviour's sufferings, which we are not able to comprehend, is that which consisted in the interruption and cutting off of the divine presence; this was absolutely necessary, in order to put him into a condition of suffering in any degree. The divinity is not capable of any imperfection or misery; it is eternally possessed of intire and consummate happiness, without the least mixture or allay: And therefore, while there remained a clear sense, and full perception of the immediate presence of the divine nature, our Saviour could not have suffered any pain in his body,

or

or sorrow in his mind ; there could have been no room for either, and all degrees of misery would have vanished, as darkness at the presence of the Sun. Guilt and misery are alike eternally separated from the divine presence ; and while that countenance shined upon him in the brightness of its glory, he could no more have been subject to pain and anguish, than he was to the pollution of sin ; therefore in order to that agony he felt in his soul, he must have abandoned himself ; and have withdrawn his human nature from the ineffable bliss and consolation of his God-head.

It is true, even in the greatest bitterness of this agony, the union of the two natures remained inviolable. He did not cease to be God, even at that time when he was the most wretched of mortal men ; and therefore this presence was not cut off by any separation, or dissolution of that indissoluble union, by which in one person he must have been God blessed for ever ; and for which reason, with great significancy of speech, it is said in scripture, that the church of God is purchased with his own blood.

Now if it be asked here, how can this be ? If the two natures were so intimate and inseparable, how could he feel pain and sorrow, since he that was God could not but know that he was so ? The answer that becomes us best in this state of blindness and frailty is, that we do not know how. God hath given us no solution for this in scripture ; only from



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thence we plainly infer, that the two natures in Christ remain without confusion; the properties of each continue distinct, though at the same time they are affirmed of each other; and accordingly that he suffered in his human nature, while the divinity remained impassible. But how, or in what degree the divine presence was withdrawn: What it was that did so effectually intercept the immediate communication of the divine attributes, so as to leave the human nature to suffer by itself: What that thick veil must have been, which interposed to cut off those glorious rays, so as not to leave a present consciousness and feeling of his own perfections; insomuch that he who was God should be left to labour under the greatest extremity mortality could be exposed to; and the humanity seem to be partaker of nothing from the Godhead, but infinite strength to bear what was otherwise unsupportable: How that depth of despondency he expressed so pathetically for the intermission of the divine presence, was consistent with certain hope, and a full trust and confidence in God: And lastly what that consternation of mind was, and anguish of soul that he felt in that sad interval: All this is unconceivable and inexpressible; it is mystery, and it is for the glory of it that we cannot solve it; neither are we able to explain this, nor would others be able to understand us if we could. The manner of this suspension and intermission of the divine presence, is

as unaccountable as the union of it with the S E R M.  
 humanity ; therefore instead of going about to IX.  
 describe what we have no notion of, namely  
 the truth and reality of this part of our Sa-  
 viour's sufferings, let us speak of it as well as  
 we can in our own language, and measure it  
 by the model of a man ; let us raise in our-  
 selves the most lively image our minds are ca-  
 pable of ; and we shall find this enough to an-  
 swer all the ends of religion in this life : For  
 though we are not able to conceive what this  
 part of his agony was ; yet it will be abun-  
 dantly sufficient to those ends, if we are con-  
 vinced that it exceeded all comprehension ;  
 and we shall be easily induced to believe this,  
 if we consider these few things.

I. First, that this divine presence, which was  
 obscured and withdrawn from him, is the on-  
 ly source and fountain of all joy and conso-  
 lation ; and when once that face was turned  
 away from him, from whence all happiness  
 flows, then must all anguish and misery fol-  
 low. It is from this fountain that all things  
 derive their being and perfection ; in his pre-  
 sence is *the fullness of joy*, and at his *right*  
*hand are pleasures for evermore* ; and accord-  
 ing to the distance that any thing is removed  
 from it, so far it must be in proportion miser-  
 able : This was what he was deprived of ;  
 that beatifick vision which fills the Saints and  
 Angels with everlasting transport and exstasy ;  
 the least moment's intermission of which those  
 glorified beings dread, more than we do death ;  
 And

SER M. And in exchange for this, he was surrounded  
 IX. by those accursed spirits of darkness, with  
 their aspect composed to all the consternation  
 and terror, that the powers of hell could arm  
 them with; and for whom he had the greatest  
 detestation and abhorrence.

2. Again, that which will open to our  
 minds a larger prospect of this melancholick  
 scene, is to consider that he was thus bereft of  
 the divine presence, who before had ever a  
 clear and immediate prospect of it; nay who  
 was himself possessed of all the glories of the  
 Godhead; even in the condition of his hu-  
 manity the spirit was upon him *without mea-  
 sure*, and the immediate presence of the di-  
 vinity in him disclosed itself in all he said or  
 did: And therefore for him, who had the full  
 enjoyment hitherto, to be all at once divested  
 of it, certainly he must have felt an anguish  
 of soul that we can neither feel, nor think,  
 nor speak of. This interruption was of that  
 glory which he had with God *before the  
 world was*: He was as it were emptied of that  
 fulness of the Godhead, of which he was par-  
 taker from all eternity; no less than the inef-  
 fable bliss of that most incomprehensible  
 being, so far transcending the utmost capa-  
 cities of all his creatures. Could a man con-  
 ceive what the happiness of God is, he might  
 then frame some imagination of that anguish  
 of soul which must follow the want of it.  
 He only knew what it was, and therefore he  
 alone could so bewail and mourn the loss, *my  
 God,*



God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me? SERM.  
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3. What that sorrow is, which is conceived in the mind even of a good man, for any intermission of God's countenance and favour, is altogether inexpressible; and the more holy and pious men are, the more quick and pungent sense they have of it. How much more must it have been so in him who was the best of men; who had been eternally partaker of all the felicity of the Godhead; and even in the days of his humiliation, had never the least interruption of the utmost love and favour of God? It is impossible to express the feeling sense of a truly pious soul and sanctified heart, for the absence of those spiritual comforts: David frequently bewails the loss of the light of God's countenance, and expresseth his longings and desires after it by the most craving appetites of the body; saying, *my soul gaspeth, and is athirst for God*. The reason why wicked men, who are totally bereft of all the influences of the spirit, have yet no sense of it, is because they are spiritually dead; their consciences are seared and stupified, and they are past all feeling; their minds are as literally dead, when the spirit of God is totally withdrawn, as the body is when it is separated from the soul; and they are no more capable of any comfort or refreshment from it, than a carcass is to be cheered by the light and warmth of the sun: But in the soul of Christ there

SERM. there was a lively image of God and goodness; and therefore the impressions it received as soon as God had hid his face from him, and the unconceivable joy of the holy Ghost had left him, must have been great, according to that intire and consummate holiness that was in him.

4. In this dreadful interval, we read that there appeared an Angel ἐπισχύων, i. e. *strengthening*, but not comforting of him; and which is not said to have been sent neither: This was a plain indication, that the comfort of God's presence had forsaken him; and a certain mark of displeasure; as appears from a parallel place in the 33d. of Exodus, where God being incensed at the Israelites, threatens to send his Angel before them, as for himself, he would go no farther with them: But upon their mourning, and the prayer of Moses, he says, *my presence shall go with thee*. Before the time of his agony, we read, the Angels came to minister to him; but now he who gave all things being, humbles himself so low as to receive strength from a creature; and therefore, this is no argument that he was not God, as well as man, as is urged both by the Ariens and Socinians: This passage proves no more, than that his human nature was not the divine. All his sufferings was a voluntary submission of the humanity to pain and misery; and in this agony he yielded his soul to such a state of humiliation and dejection, that notwithstanding the inseparable union of it

it with the Godhead, it had not a present sense and consciousness of the ineffable joy and consolation thereof: And this is but such another instance of his own free condescension, as when he called upon his Disciples to watch with him: And indeed it must have been very low with him, when he sought to them for comfort, to whom he had made repeated promises of great things; and had so often raised their expectation from him:

5. To all which we may add this one consideration more, namely, that the being separated from the presence of God, is the cause of the unsupportable misery of impenitent sinners in another world; it is the substance of that curse pronounced upon the wicked at the day of judgment; and it is in this, with despair added to it, consist the torments of the damned; and though there was no degree of this in our Saviour, but that his faith and adherence was as firm and unshaken as the divine union; yet this will serve to put us upon thinking how much greater the anguish of his soul was, than can be thought of or described; how it must have exceeded all imagination; and how there is a peculiar emphasis in that expression of the divine prophet, uttered in the person of Christ, Psalm 116. 3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me.*

I should now proceed to consider those other instances of our Saviour's sufferings, namely,



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namely, that unsupportable load of the sins of mankind: The prospect he had of the eternal ruin and damnation of such multitudes of obstinate sinners, who should receive no advantage by what he suffered; and also what he suffered from the malicious injections and temptations of the Devil, and the insinuations of the powers of darkness: But as the time will not now permit me to do it, I must defer the prosecution of this subject untill the next opportunity; in the mean time I must desire you to be assured, that the time will come, when we shall know what he suffered for us, when the veil will be removed, and the melancholick scene of our Saviour's passion shall open to our view, and present us with a clear prospect of it all, not to discompose or terrify us; as it now would do, perhaps even to madness; but as it will then be the ground and foundation of everlasting joy and triumph; then we shall have capacities to understand and sing the praises of infinite love; of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and which alone was greater than his sufferings. The bitter agony of Christ exceeds all our comprehension, and is not a proper object of human passion: Since then it so far transcends the measures of our affections, it is not so much a sensitive as a rational sorrow that is our duty here; sighs, groans and tears, with other indications of mourning and sorrow, do very well become the contemplation of his bodily sufferings, which  
are

are sufficient to extort lamentation and weeping from hearts grown soft and tender with a sense of religion and goodness: But here we are to compose our minds to an awful seriousness, and veneration for what we cannot worthily grieve: Let us then, and especially in this solemn season, (in which the church invites and exhorts us to this purpose) address our fervent prayers to the throne of grace, that we may be enabled effectually to possess our minds with such a full conviction of our want of a Saviour, with such a serious sense of the love of Christ, as may prepare us to share the benefit, and to celebrate the great mystery of that sacrifice of himself, which our Lord and Saviour once offered for the sins of the whole world: And oh! let not our returns of gratitude be the less, but the greater, because the sufferings of our redeemer exceed all imagination: Let us supply the want of a sensitive sorrow, with intense meditation and wonder; and with the humblest adoration of the unfathomable depth of these mysterious sufferings, which great and unbounded as they are, were all finished on the cross: And let us comfort ourselves with this firm trust in God's mercy, that for the merits of the known sufferings, and the unconceivable agony of his only begotten son, our sins shall be so done away, that we shall be made partakers of those joys which he has purchased for all those that trust in, and that love and obey him.

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# S E R M O N X.

On the agony of Christ.

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MATH. xxvi. 38.

*Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*

SERM.  
X.

**I** Come now to consider from the words of the text, those other parts of our Saviour's agony, which the time would not permit me to enter on in my last discourse in this place.

II. The second part of our Saviour's agony was that unsupportable burden of our sins under which he laboured, and which was the cause of all the rest; and therefore the Scriptures are more plain and pathetick in expressing the grievousness of this part of his agony: and indeed, though we are utterly unable to conceive the unsupportable weight and extent of it, yet it is very obvious and natural to imagine, that it must be exceeding great, and must far transcend the limits of our narrow capacities. If we consider

1st, The



ist, the natural vileness, and deformity of S E R M.  
sin, which is so loathsome and abominable to X.  
the nature of God, that the least degree of it  
was sufficient to have separated us eternally  
from his presence, who is of purer eyes than  
to behold iniquity, even in the smallest in-  
stance. Guilt is the distorting the genuine  
powers of the soul; it is the corruption of the  
excellent workmanship of God, and putting  
the order of the rational part of the creation  
out of course. It is monstrous and no crea-  
ture of his; and it is impossible for us to ima-  
gine what the opposition and contradiction of  
it is to the divine nature till the day of judg-  
ment, when God shall disown it, and banish  
it from his presence for ever. Christ alone  
of all the race of Adam could see all this per-  
fectly, and could be truly sensible what an  
injury sin is to the purity of God; how near  
it strikes at the majesty of heaven; and what  
that foul ingratitude is, which makes such  
returns to infinite mercy and love. And this  
must have raised an unspeakable abhorrence  
and detestation of it in his unspotted and righ-  
teous soul; which must have been at this time  
rackt between his zeal for the glory of God  
on the one hand, and the abomination of those  
sins he took upon himself on the other: And  
this the rather because, by reason of that di-  
vine spirit of knowledge that was in him, he  
must have exactly known the number of all  
the sins of men, together with all their ag-  
gravations. He saw all the weakness and in-

SERM. firmities of mankind; they were all as naked  
 X. to his view as they will be in the last day,  
 when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open,  
 and that God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

2. We may consider what that infinite justice is which was to be atoned for those sins; that inviolable inexorable attribute of God, which must have been satisfied to the utmost; by reason of which the least sin could not go unpunished, and therefore must receive its punishment in the person of Christ, that we might escape the divine vengeance, and be put into a condition of mercy and pardon. Accordingly, now it was that God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; now it was that the arrows of the Almighty were within him; and that the terrors of the Lord set themselves in array against him? now was he made a curse for us, the wrath of God was let out against the sins of men in him, which it is natural to imagine was as great and violent, as if it were to exert it self in one act against the wickedness of all mankind. It is most certain, that in the greatest pungency of his agony he was most dear to God; and he could not but love him, at a time when he was discharging the profoundest act of obedience to his father's will: *Therefore, says he, doth my father love me, because I lay down my life.* John x. 17. So that it is confessed, he did not sustain the anger of God

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in the same sense that impenitent sinners undergo it. SERM.  
X.

Men who make this objection consider anger in God, as it is a passion in man; and then draw their consequences. Nothing is more usual, than for men to make no distinction between the attributes of Almighty God, and the affections of mortal men; and then dispute with one another. We know not what anger is in God; nor have we the least notion of the manner how our Saviour bore it; it was upon him so as we cannot explain.

It is plain the fierce anger of God was so far upon him, as to be the occasion of his sufferings; for otherwise he could not suffer, and the very withdrawing all sense of the divine favour, was a great expression of his anger. And besides it is expressly said *Isai. liii. 6.* that *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, 10, and that *it pleased the Lord to bruise him*, and that *he hath put him to grief*, and that it is he that *made his soul an offering for sin*, which expressions import nothing less than the anger of God against the sins of men; nor indeed can we conceive how these sufferings could be a punishment for the sins of men, in the person of Christ, by way of atonement to the justice of God; without imagining that he must have sustained the anger of God against sin, in some sense or other. He could not have made the sins of men his own, without sustaining the punishment of them; and



SERM. though he was perfectly innocent himself, yet  
 X. at that time God was to deal with him as a  
 } guilty person.

Whereas therefore in other instances of his passion the conflict was, either with the malice and cruelty of men; or with the spirits of darkness; now the struggle is with Almighty force, and it was the pressure of this unsupportable load of the divine vengeance against sin, which rendered him *fore amazed*, and *very heavy*, and extorted from him that pathetic expression of his grief, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. We little know what the weight of the divine anger is; should it exert it self against any one of us for the least of our sins, who could bear it? And what then must the weight of that anger be, which was laid on the sins of the whole world, when the wrath of God was to display it self all at once, in one single person, for all the wickedness of the whole race of Adam? Especially if we conceive that the short sufferings of Christ were to bear a proportion to the punishment and misery consequent to the guilt and demerit of all mankind. *Ità quidem*, as one speaks, *ut brevis passio Christi æternæ damnandorum æquipolleat: et unius passio tot electorum myriadibus redimendis sufficiat*. (Witf. in Sym. p. 285.)

And now can we wonder enough what that spirit must be, which was able to bear this? certainly no one could have thus sustained the divine anger, but a divine person. It was by  
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the resistless stroke of this fury, that Lucifer fell from heaven ; and that all his train of fallen angels were consigned over to endless misery, and the *blackness of darkness for ever* ; and it was this which had sent fallen undone mankind *quick into hell* ; into the everlasting torments of the damned ; if he had not taken that wrath upon himself, which neither man, nor angel was able to bear. Had any meer creature substituted it self in our stead ; nay the greatest angel in heaven, they had sunk under the load, and had been crushed into nothing ; and therefore it was, that the hand of God was *upon the man of his right hand* ; *upon the son of man whom he made so strong for himself*. For though the divinity did not suffer, yet it gave strength to the human nature to undergo what was otherwise unsupportable.

3. But thirdly another thing which gives us a yet farther prospect into this part of our Saviour's sufferings, is the consideration of that anguish and consternation of mind which must have arisen within him from a Sense of that guilt he brought upon himself, and thereby made his own. Trouble and vexation of spirit are the natural effects of sin, wherever it is ; in taking this upon him, he must have taken the consequents and attendants of it. And now from this hint, you immediately begin to think what that sorrow must be, which must have been caused in the soul of Christ, from a feeling and consciousness of

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that

SERM. that prodigious mass of iniquity, under which  
 X. he laboured; no less than the sins of the whole  
 world. That yoke of all our transgressions,  
 which in the language of the prophet Jeremiah, *Lam. i. 14.* were all *bound* by the hand of God, which were *wreathed and come up upon his neck.*

Now that which will help our thoughts in this contemplation, is the reflecting upon the horror of a guilty mind; the consternation of one impenitent sinner when his conscience is awakened; when it stings and lashes him, and pierces his soul with a pungency infinitely beyond all bodily pain. We are not, it is true, to imagine that Christ, who had no sin of his own, could have what we call remorse in the strict sense of the word; as it is a grief occasioned from a sense of a man's own proper sin. But certainly he that took the guilt upon himself, may as easily be imagined to have taken that anguish of soul which is the constant companion and attendant of it; and this may well be supposed to last during the time of his agony. And now in that interval he groaned under the racks and tortures consequent to the guilt of all unrepented sin, together with the dreadful apprehensions of that divine vengeance that was due to it. This gives us an amazing sense of the bitterness of his agony; especially if it be considered, that the guilt of the whole world lay upon him, even of impenitent sinners; since nothing less than this could render them  
 inexcusable



inexcusable when they come to appear before SERM.  
the tribunal of Christ. X.

But if we should confine our thoughts with-  
in the number of the elect alone, as some men  
love to speak, and consider only the grief and  
anguish of mind which is necessary in order  
to repentance in the hearts of all truly sincere  
and humble penitents; yet even this will make  
up a very grievous and intolerable load, and  
cannot but startle us to imagine, how it should  
all meet together in the soul of one single  
person.

No tongue can express what the trouble of  
a truly penitent and devout soul is, for the  
guilt but of one wilful and deliberate sin.  
David hath expressed it most feelingly, *my  
sins, says he, have taken such hold upon me,  
that I am not able to look up; there is no rest  
in my bones, by reason of my sin, they are like  
a sore burthen, too heavy for me to bear; my  
heart panteth, and my strength hath failed me.*  
As pathetick as these sayings are, they are but  
faint descriptions of what is only to be felt,  
and not described. And what then must the  
degree of that sorrow be, which seized the  
breast of him, who *bath born all our griefs,  
and carried our sorrows*; the most literal in-  
terpretation of which text is, that he took  
upon him, and underwent all the remorse and  
anguish of mind, which was necessary in or-  
der to a sincere contrition in the hearts of all  
the sinners in the world; all our sins were im-  
puted to him, and he was as sorrowful for  
S 4 them,

SERM. them, as if they were all his own; and that

X. he were to prevail for pardon for himself; to which purpose hear the saying of a great man, For, says he, *if the true contrition of one single sinner, bleeding under the sting of the law, only for his own iniquities, all which notwithstanding he knows not, cannot be performed without great bitterness and remorse; what bounds can be set to that grief? what measures to that anguish which proceedeth from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?* (Pearson.)

If it should be asked here, what necessity is there for sorrow in us, when his agony was sufficient for all our sins? the answer is plain, namely that the utmost sorrow that we can have for our sins, comes infinitely short of that degree which is necessary to atone the justice of God, and prevail for our pardon. But the grief and sorrow that was in Christ was boundless as the sins of mankind; and bore a proportion to that divine justice he was to preserve inviolable in the pardon of them; so that we are required to be sorry as we are required to be obedient; i. e. we must be sincere in both; not that either of them can be sufficient, but both are accepted through the merits of Christ.

III. The third Instance I shall give of that part of our Saviour's sufferings which we are not able to comprehend is, the prospect he then had of the eternal ruin and damnation of such multitudes of obstinate sinners who should

should receive no advantage by what he was to suffer. Now at the approach of his death which was for the salvation of all, he began to be touched with a nearer sense of this. His death was to be a sufficient atonement for the sins of mankind, out of the vast numbers of which his was however to be but a little flock; *he knew all men, that many were to be called, but few should be chosen*, and that notwithstanding all he had done the greater part would go the *broad way that leads to destruction*. It is a melancholy consideration to any of us who have but one to be so nearly concerned for; how much more must it have been so to him who had a greater degree of love and compassion for every one of us, than we can possibly have for our selves! When he beheld the city of Jerusalem, the prospect he had of its destruction made him weep over it, saying, *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hidden from thy eyes! Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*. If he could with tears thus lament and bemoan the temporal destruction of one city, what must the anguish of his soul have been for that eternal destruction that was to be the reward of their sin and infidelity? This was not to be expressed with tears; this immense and boundless sorrow was to be kept within that divine breast which alone was able to comprehend it: We have not capacities to know  
or



SERM. or feel it, as will appear if we consider three  
 X. or four things.

First, how little we know what damnation is; it is represented to us by the rolling in flames, and an everlasting remorse of conscience, the gnawings of that *worm that never dies*; and what we can imagine of these is very terrible; but alas! these are but faint resemblances of that torture and anguish a soul and body united for eternity will be able to undergo; little do we know what it is in reality, and the least prospect of it, as we have of sensible objects now, would scare and terrify us; men can have no notion of this till they come to know what it is to be doom'd to everlasting *destruction from the presence of the Lord*.

Again, we are to consider that by that excellent spirit of knowledge that was in him he had a full prospect of the torments of the damned; he saw into future times, into the other world, and had eternity in view. He foresaw them placed before his own tribunal necessarily condemned, and then consigned over to the direful torments of hell; he beheld them already in the flames, and heard the shrieks, and groans, and blasphemies extorted by that everlasting horror and despair.

Thirdly, consider how little we are able to know that love of Christ which the Apostle tells us *passes knowledge*, Ephes. iii. 19. If we judge of it by our love for one another, we measure a divine attribute by the model  
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of a man; there is no proportion; his was SERM.  
 infinite as the divine nature he was partaker X.  
 of; wherefore it is beyond our imagination to  
 think how tenderly he was affected with a  
 sense of the danger and the miseries of man-  
 kind: He had a mighty concern even for his  
 crucifiers; their sin and their damnation  
 touched his tender heart with compassion,  
 and his bowels yearned over them while they  
 were nailing him to the cross: Even in the  
 pangs of death, he poured out his soul in  
 prayer for them, *father, forgive them, they*  
*know not what they do*: Certainly he had at  
 the same time the like concern for all that  
 should crucify him afresh, to the end of the  
 world.

Lastly, we are to consider that now at  
 his agony was the last time that ever he was  
 to lament and bewail them. All his suffer-  
 ings were to be soon finished, and he himself  
 to be in the glorious and happy condition of  
 the Godhead; and then no trouble or anguish  
 of mind could seize him; no degree of con-  
 cern, that gives uneasiness and disturbance, is  
 consistent with the uninterrupted felicity of  
 the Godhead.

These things considered will give us some  
 imperfect notion of this part of our Saviour's  
 sufferings, and convince us how little able  
 we are to comprehend them. Now once for  
 ever he mourns the loss, the everlasting loss of  
 his children, the work of his hands, and the  
 price

SERM. price of his blood. In Isaiah liii. 11. it is  
 X. said, *he shall see of the travail of his soul, and  
 be satisfied*: It is a lively metaphor; as a woman, after the pangs of childbirth, is full of joy that a child is born; so after his death and agony, he should be rejoiced with the prospect of that numerous progeny, which should be regenerate and born again to a lively faith in the merits of those sufferings. And is any thing more reasonable than to think that, on the other hand, the like prospect of those multitudes that were to miscarry was a heavy load upon his spirits at the time of his suffering? And what cause of mourning and lamentation must it have been to infinite love to see at one view the actual eternal damnation of all wilful and unrepenting sinners, for whom he left his glory to suffer unconceivable pain and anguish? And if David could cry out, O Absalom, my son, my son! for the death of one rebellious child, with what unexpressible sorrow, do we think that Christ must have bemoaned the damnation of such a numerous progeny; who, instead of reigning with him in glory, must be consigned over to endless and unsupportable torments?

IV. Another thing which it is more than probable was a great ingredient in the sufferings of our Saviour's mind, were the powerful insinuations of the Devil, the prince of the air, and his Angels those spirits of darkness. As he was led into the wilderness to be tempted, so he retired into the garden to endure the fiery



fiery darts of Satan, and suffer all those terrors SERM.  
 of mind which it was possible for the power X.  
 of hell to affect him with. While the inti-

mate union of the divine and human nature remained intirely uninterrupted and conspicuous to him, it was utterly impossible for him to suffer any thing of this nature; but now the rays of the divine glory are cut off from him, and the light and favour of God's countenance was withdrawn, by interposing a cloud of thick darkness between the divine and human nature: Then there was full scope for the Devil and his evil spirits to play upon him with all their malice and subtilty; to raise in him dreadful apprehensions of the wrath of God; to fill him with terror and confusion of mind, and wound him in all the passions and affections of human nature; that his very soul might, in a literal sense, be made an offering for sin.

This many expositors take to be the design and meaning of that text in Luke xxii.

53. *While I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness.*

You were hitherto restrained from laying hands on me, by the mighty power of God, though you have had all along a good will to it: But now that God hath hid his face from me, I am left to undergo the cruelty of men, and the malice of hell: You could have had no power against me till it was given you  
 from

SERM. from above: Now by the permission of God  
 X. is your hour to torment my body, and of the  
 spirits of darkness to afflict my soul.

Dr. Lightfoot upon this text observes, that all expositors do by darkness understand the Devil; and on the 44th. verse of the same chapter, he expressly attributes the agony of our Saviour's mind, which drew from him sweat like great drops of blood, to the bite or sting of the old Serpent. John xiv. 43. After the temptation in the wilderness, it is said, the Devil *left our Saviour for a season*. The same learned man observes, that this time of his agony was the season in which Satan was to return; for God had then slackened his chain, that all the malice that was in him against the whole elect of God, summed up and gathered together into one head, might at one stroke and onset be brandished against Christ without measure: And accordingly that Christ was now wrestling with a furious enraged Devil, permitted, without any check or restraint from divine providence, to exert all his force and rage against him; the reason of which he observes to be, that even human nature might get a conquest over that insulting enemy; for it had been a small thing to have vanquished the Devil, by a meer divine power.

And again, on Luke xxii. 43. he observes, that as the Devil assaulted the first Adam in a garden, so he did the last; and since Christ was not to be allured by his former temptations,

tions, he would now try to fright and terrify him: When he tempted him in the wilderness he put on the disguise of some good Angel, or rather some kind of resemblance of the holy Ghost; but in this last temptation he puts on himself, appears in his own colours, in some direful formidable figure, the most frightful he could assume: And indeed it cannot be imagined how terrible he can represent himself to our senses and imaginations, if God should so far give us over to his power: Nor indeed can we think his conflict, in the time of his agony, could be less than that even of a good man; who doth not only *wrestle against flesh and blood*, but *against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. by which all people understand the insinuations and malicious attempts of evil spirits upon our minds; whose constant method it is to fill the souls of those with fears, and perplexing desponding thoughts, upon whom all other temptations have failed of success.

How great an ingredient this was in the agony of our Saviour's mind is impossible for us to conceive; for we know not after what manner the evil spirits operate upon the soul; we see nothing of the bounds and limits of their power, how they affect us, nor to what degree they are able to do so, if they had full liberty to wreck their malice upon us: Certainly if they were not restrained, they would dart confusion into all our faculties; they  
would



SERM. would fill us with horroure, and scarr us out of  
 X. all sober use of our reason: Besides, we are  
 ignorant how far God, for the ends of his  
 own justice and glory, might have let loose  
 this old dragon upon him. All this is mystery to us, and beyond our comprehension; but we may well imagine this part of his agony to be very sharp and grievous, if we consider how great an enemy the Devil is to God and goodness; and how much he is enraged against the whole race of mankind. Our nature, and not the nature of Angels, was taken into the divinity by the incarnation of the son of God; and by this means we are like to possess the place of the fallen Angels in heaven; and this transports them to the utmost degree of implacable malice and envy against us. Now this being the very hour for which our Saviour came into the world, and the critical juncture in which the work of salvation was to be compleated and finished, and all the interest of hell lying at stake; it is sure they took this opportunity to load him with blackness of horroure and amazement.

It is not unlikely that the Devil and his Angels, who had the vanity to imagine that their temptations in the wilderness might have had effect upon him, were not without all hope of driving him now to despair; and by that means to defeat the whole counsel of God; or at least to drive him to such unsupportable extremity of misery, as to make him assume  
 his

his power again ; to break through all that misery at once, and leave mankind to bear their own burden, and groan under it eternally. Besides, if they had no such prospect, yet *this was their hour* ; a very short time for them to have the advantage of him : Eternity was to be his, and therefore they were now only to exercise their revenge upon him, by whose power they were ever after to be reserved in everlasting chains under darkness.

No doubt, therefore, but these spirits applied themselves to every passion and affection of his mind, filling him with confusion and dreadful apprehensions of the wrath and vengeance of God upon sin : So that the condition of his soul was like that of a body tortured in all its members, and racked all at once in every joint. See the folly and weakness of that wicked one, compared with the power and wisdom of almighty God : When he acted with the most intense malice against mankind, he was most effectually promoting their salvation : His subtilty recoiled upon his own head, which was broke at the very instant he was bruising our Saviour's heel ; and what he designed for our utter ruin, became the eternal destruction of his kingdom : Therefore well may we cry out with the Apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !*

By this time we must be sensible what a vast, what an immense difference there is be-

SERM. between the sufferings of our Saviour, and those  
 X. of any other man whatsoever! How little  
 { they knew of all this, or considered it, who  
 have compared the sufferings of others with  
 those of Christ, and thought it no small ob-  
 jection against christianity! as particularly Cel-  
 sus in Origen, who asserts that Christ was  
 equalled, if not exceeded by Anaxarchus; who,  
 while he was pounding to death in a stone  
 mortar, by order of the king of Cyprus, told  
 his executioners they beat upon the case only  
 of Anaxarchus, but could not hurt himself:  
 And in the midst of his pain, he bit off his  
 tongue, and spit it in the tyrant's face. (Orig.  
 cont. Cels. 7. p. 368.) It is true it was the  
 case only of Anaxarchus that was hurt; all  
 he felt was in his body: His mind was hard  
 and callous, he had no feeling there; and he  
 had only pride and vanity to indure. And this  
 is the condition of many wicked men at their  
 death; they have sinned away all sense of  
 God and goodness; instead of any trouble for  
 the sins of others, they have not the least sense  
 of their own; and they are as little sensible  
 of being intirely deprived of the grace and  
 favour of God, as the eye of a dead man is  
 of being deprived of light. Their minds are  
 seared and stupified, and they feel nothing  
 there, but the fear of pain in their bodies:  
 The horrible stings and remorse of conscience  
 are reserved for another world; and the Devil  
 need not give them any trouble here, whom  
 he



he is sure to have in everlasting torments for ever. SERM.  
X.

If we compare the sufferings of Christ with those of good men, the reason why they undergo them with chearfulness and courage is, because they have all that support and comfort which was withdrawn from him, that he might, during the time of his agony, labour under unspeakable misery. They have a present sense of the pardon of that guilt, which actually lay upon him; they are so far from bearing the load of other peoples sins, that they are lightened of their own; they have the presence and comfort of that holy spirit, which was withdrawn from him; which drives away from them the terrors of the spirits of darkness. And therefore well might many of his martyrs suffer torments and death with a composed and chearful mind; carry on the same calmness and serenity through most exquisite racks and tortures; and go out of the world with exultation and triumph, whilst he was *exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, before he came to it: They had not only an Angel, but the immediate influences of the holy Ghost to comfort them; to fill them with a secret unspeakable joy, whilst he was desolate and forsaken: They enjoyed that glorious prospect, which was cut off from him; accordingly we find St. Stephen, at his death, *saw the heavens open, and the son of man standing at the right hand of God*, which filled him with extasy and transport: But

SERM.

X.

when our Saviour was upon the cross, *it was all over darkness*, and he was forced to cry out with a loud voice, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint?* And in the rest of the 22d. Psalm, which is thought to be his prayer upon the cross; the substance of his complaint is, that good men were ever supported in all their extremities, by his immediate influence; *our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them; they put their trust in thee, and were not confounded.* But as for him, he says God had given him over to the merciless cruelty of wicked men; who upbraided him with that very absence of his father's spirit and power: *He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he will have him.*

Now if any one that hears, is apt to think that the sufferings of Christ are here enlarged and magnified beyond measure, and described above the capacities of a man to undergo; and utterly disproportionable to human nature: And from thence shall be inclined to look upon what hath been said, as all precarious conjecture, and the result only of a warm imagination; I am so far from making any apology, by way of mitigation or qualifying what is said; that I am to say something yet more hard of belief, and shocking to such narrow spirits; and that is, that if these notions are precarious and imaginary, they are so for no other reason, but because they cannot reach  
the

the truth and reality of the sufferings of our Saviour's mind : We have not capacities for comprehending the reality, the boundless extent and degrees of his sufferings ; particularly of the agony of his mind : And therefore it is, that we thus help out our own conceptions of them with the liveliest images our imaginations are furnished with, or reason can suggest ; which, after all, do raise up in us as imperfect an idea of what he then endured, as we now have of the unconceivable bliss and unspeakable happiness he now enjoys. Who can tell to what degree those passions and affections were to be moved, which had infinite knowledge and goodness to sway them ? The intimate union of the Godhead with the humanity put it into a condition of suffering, infinitely beyond what it would have been capable of in the person of a meer man. We are not to look upon the motions of our Saviour's soul, as nothing more than the affections of a man ; but as the attributes of a divine person, which rendered him qualified for a joy, or a sorrow proportionable : So that the very thing, which made him capable of greater happiness than any other man, put him into a condition of greater degrees of anguish and trouble in his mind : *His human nature*, says Bishop Pearson, *though in conjunction with the divinity, suffered more than if it were alone ; and the divine nature suffered as little, as if it had not been conjoined.* He



SERM. must have been man, to have suffered at all ;  
 X. and he must have been united to the divinity,  
 to be able to suffer what he did.

And this is a plain account, why the scriptures lay the greatest stress upon the sufferings of our Saviour's body ; not because these were the acutest, and most unsupportable part of them ; for, as we have seen, there are plain indications to the contrary in scripture : But because his outward sufferings were more obvious and remarkable : The tearing of his body, and spilling of his blood, with the circumstances that attended them, were things best suited to our present condition of infirmity ; and apt to affect and touch us most feelingly. Besides, these are things, which could be prophetically described ; represented by types and figures ; and the memory of them easily perpetuated to posterity by symbols : As it is now in the most holy sacrament of the Lord's supper ; wherein the sufferings of his body only are represented : And accordingly, these are sufficient arguments of the divine love ; and answer all the ends of religion in this world ; though men should carry their thoughts no farther. Whereas his internal agonies could neither be described, nor typified ; nor the memory of them conveyed down to all generations of men, by any outward symbols or representations ; They are beyond the proportion of our understanding ; and therefore must have been reserved for the subject of our praise and wonder in another world.

Now

Now if that part of our Saviour's sufferings which were visible, and whereof we can have a sense and feeling, are sufficient arguments of infinite love; what must the hidden anguish of his mind be, which none but God could see, and Christ alone could feel? O! could this grief of his *be weighed*, as Job speaks of his own, and his *calamity laid in the balance together, now, it would be heavier than the sand of the sea*; Job. vi. 2. heavier than the sins of mankind, which were grievous and numberless: It outweighed them all, though the weight would have crushed mankind to death, to everlasting death; never to rise again. Were it a thing possible for us to frame a notion of his sufferings, so as to take in the full extent and latitude of them, we should be all inflamed with love and gratitude: Could we comprehend them! did I say? We wretched mortals! who shrink at the sight of a pityful object, and are rendered instantly miserable by it. Alas! we could not now bear the knowledge of them; the prospect of them would overwhelm us; it would dart confusion through our souls; and we should sweat great drops of blood, as he did when he felt them: Our whole frame would be dissolved, and we should sink under the mighty weight of woe.

I shall only observe to you one thing farther, which is very peculiar to our Saviour in all his sufferings, both of body and mind; and which no other person was capable of;

SERM. namely, that all these sufferings were perfectly  
 X. voluntary in every instant of them; should we  
 suppose any other whatsoever willing to undergo that price of our redemption, and that his sufferings could be sufficient; however chearful and forward he was in entering upon the work at first, yet when once the heavy hand of God was upon him, it would not be in his power to recover himself, it would not be in his choice to go through with his sufferings, or shake them off at any instant he pleased; no power less than what is infinite could do that; no one else could have power at any instant whatsoever, *to lay down his life, and take it up again.* And if we imagined any other person had the power to do this, yet he could not have the very will to do it; for when once he were actually under the extremity of torments, he could not but wish to be eased of his pains. It is not in man not to release himself if he could; nature would overcome all resolution, and nothing but infinite love could make the fiercest agony of mind, and torture of body, his perfect choice in the greatest height. In every instant of our Saviour's sufferings, he could have shook off the yoke, and have been immediately in the full fruition of all the glory and happiness of the Godhead: The same perfect freedom of choice, by which he first undertook them, ran through every part of his sufferings; and in every moment of them he had the same  
 power



power to desist, by which he first undertook them. SERM.  
X.


Which evidently shews us that no sufferings less than that of a divine person could be effectual for our salvation, because neither man nor Angel could have that infinite power and boundless love which were absolutely necessary to make their sufferings perfectly voluntary in every moment of them; these could not be in any limited nature, and he must be God to have them; and this absolute necessity of our salvation by the sufferings of a divine person, and that it could be no otherwise effected, I think is plainly intimated in that prayer of our Saviour's in the garden thrice repeated, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* If what is possible? If it is possible to answer all the ends of the glory of God, and salvation of mankind as effectually by any other means; but it was not possible, and therefore the cup did not pass from him, but he drank it.

Now put all these things together, and to speak in the prophet's style, *Lam. i. 14.* consider *the yoke of our transgressions bound and wreathed by the hand of God and layed upon his neck* all at once; and then behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. How grossly do they judge of the sufferings of Christ, and what scanty notions have they of his passion, who think of nothing beyond the stripes and buffetings, the revilings and scourgings, the pricking of the thorns and the piercing


SERM. cing of the nails through his hands and feet.

X. These indeed were grievous in their kind, and the dignity of the person who suffered them rendered them valuable infinitely beyond the same in the person of a meer man. But alas! they were as short of what he suffered as human nature is below the divinity; and we can no more frame a full conception of the sorrow and grief he then endured, than we can of that glory and happiness he now enjoys. The sufferings of his humanity were infinite as that divine nature to which it was united; so that we are lost in wonder and amazement when we think of them, as he was when he felt them; we can no more comprehend them than we can the divine perfections; it is as impossible for us to know the true nature and extent of them, as to endure and undergo them; and he must have been no less than God, as well as man, to have borne them.

Since, I say, the full comprehension of these sufferings are reserv'd to be the subject of praise and wonder in another world; and are among the contemplations of eternity, when we shall be let into all the treasures of divine love, and have capacities to launch out into the boundless ocean of the goodness and wisdom of God, let us, in the mean time, as we know enough to raise our passions to the highest pitch our present condition of infirmity will bear; and as the time is now drawing near in which the son of God underwent these sufferings; and this being the week set apart by the church  
for

for our meditation on them, let us, I say, SERM.  
 spend it as becomes us, in admiring and prais- X.  
 ing what we are not able to comprehend,   
 namely the breadth, and length, and depth  
 and height of that love of Christ which pas-  
 seth knowledge. *Is it nothing to you, all ye  
 that pass by?* Behold and see! There is not  
 one of us here present but what hath made a  
 considerable addition to that prodigious mass  
 of iniquity which was the occasion of all his  
 sufferings; he endur'd all this *for our trans-*  
*gressions; he was bruised for our iniquities, and*  
*the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and*  
*by his stripes we are healed;* and shall we not  
 adore that goodness and love of his which was  
 stronger than death, and continued the pre-  
 vailing passion of his soul in the greatest ex-  
 tremity and fierceness of his agony; when all  
 the powers of hell let loose upon him were  
 not able to tear us from his heart, to make  
 him let go his hold of us, and leave us to fall  
 into the bottomless pit, where there *is weep-*  
*ing, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth* to all  
 eternity. Let the contemplation of these suf-  
 ferings raise our minds to a lively hope of  
 mercy in him, and let us lay hold on those  
 promises of pardon and reconciliation through  
 this unspeakable agony: Let us pour out our  
 souls in that most excellent prayer in the Greek  
 liturgy, *διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σὲ παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστέ.*  
 By thy unknown sufferings have mercy upon  
 us, o Christ. And as the thief when he saw  
 our Saviour bleeding upon the cross cried out,  
 Lord,



SERM. *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy*  
X. *kingdom; so let every one of us, in a lively*  
 *faith and prospect of the merits of these sufferings, offer up the like prayer. Lord Jesus, remember me now thou art in thy kingdom; Rev. v. 12. for worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the ever blessed Trinity, be all honour and glory now and for evermore, Amen.*

S E R M O N

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## S E R M O N XI.

The true Christian Doctrine of the  
Intercession of Christ vindicated.

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HEB. ix. 24.

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places  
made with hands, which are the figures of  
the true; but into heaven itself, now to ap-  
pear in the presence of God for us.*

**T**HE holy places made with hands, here SERM.  
spoke of, are the holy places of the ta- XI.  
bernacle built by Moses; and more particu-  
larly the holy of holies, or the most holy  
place, into which none was to enter but the  
High-Priest; and he neither but once in a  
year, on the great day of expiation, when he  
carried in the blood of the anniversary sacri-  
fice of expiation to make atonement for him-  
self and the people. This he calls a figure of  
the true holy place, that holy of holies was a  
type or representation of heaven; and the con-  
sequence here drawn in this and the foregoing  
verse is, that as it was necessary those patterns  
of

S E R M. of things in the heavens should be purified

XI. with those legal sacrifices, so heaven itself, which was represented by it, should be purified by the blood of Christ. The only obscurity in this discourse of the Apostle is the import of that phrase of purifying *the places*; the priest's making atonement for the holy place, and answerable to this, the blood of Christ purifying the heavens, when neither of them are polluted: But the meaning is no more than this, that atonement was to be made for the sins of those people who would have polluted that place, in case they had been admitted without such expiation; and accordingly whilst the High-Priest was making the atonement, the people were not suffered to come within the tabernacle.

In the whole process of this discourse, the scope and design of the Apostle is to shew how the High-Priest, the anniversary sacrifice of expiation, and the holy of holies were all types and representatives; that they were but shadows, and patterns, and figures of things true and real: The High-Priest was a type of Christ; the great sacrifice of expiation a type of the body of Christ offered on the cross; the holy of holies a pattern of the highest heavens, where the more immediate presence of God is: And the yearly entrance of the High-Priest into the most holy place, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice that was offered for the sins of the people; and so to make atonement for them,



them, was a figure or representation of Christ's SERM.  
entering into the highest heavens, once for XI.  
ever, to make application of the infinite virtue  
of that sacrifice of himself for our salvation ;  
to appear in the presence of God, as the High-  
Priest did, to make atonement and intercession  
for us : And this the Apostle observes he per-  
forms for us, after a more excellent and ef-  
fectual manner, as his priesthood was so much  
superior to that which was only representative  
of him. *For Christ, &c.*

All this is so plain and obvious to any one  
who reads this epistle without prejudice, that  
it could hardly enter into a man's thoughts  
that it was capable of any other interpreta-  
tion ; and yet the Socinians give it all quite  
another turn ; they can't flatly deny his priestly  
office, but they make as little of it as they  
can. As for the anniversary sacrifice of expi-  
ation, they allow it to be a type of Christ ;  
but the oblation of himself they will not allow  
to be made upon the cross but in heaven ;  
by which they would at once evade the vir-  
tue and merits of that sacrifice here on earth,  
and the application of it now in heaven by  
any real intercession through the power and  
efficacy of it.

Intending now, from this text, to discourse  
of that mysterious work of our Saviour's in  
our behalf now he is entred into the true ta-  
bernacle, heaven itself, to appear in the pre-  
sence of God for us ; I shall first give a true  
account of the Socinian doctrine in this point,  
from

SERM. from their best authors; because this may be  
 XI. a happy occasion of a greater insight into this  
 part of the great mystery of our redemption,  
 and give us a more exact and comprehensive  
 knowledge of it. As it hath been ever a qua-  
 lity peculiar to the gospel, the more it is ob-  
 scured with the darkness of error, it after  
 breaks out with a more glorious light: And  
 this I am persuaded will, in God's good time,  
 be the consequence of Socinianism, the thickest  
 cloud that ever overspread the whole face of  
 Christianity.

In order to speak more plainly of our Sa-  
 viour's intercession, it will be necessary first to  
 observe what they hold concerning his Priest-  
 hood.

They unanimously deny that he was a  
 Priest at all before his ascension into heaven;  
 which I am not to speak to now, because  
 it hath not so near a relation to my pre-  
 sent subject.

They own that after his ascension he is a  
 Priest, not really and properly so; but me-  
 taphorically, and by way of allusion: *Est*  
*figuratus dicendi modus cum Christus Sacerdos*  
*vocatur*, says Socinus (on 1 John ii. 12.)  
 And Crellius, in answer to Grotius, who in-  
 sisted upon a true and proper priesthood, says  
*si hoc vult scripturam vocem sacerdotis proprie*  
*de Christo usurpare, nec ullum huic appellationi*  
*Christo tributæ subesse tropum, fallitur*: And  
 Volkelius, that subtle manager of the whole  
 cause,

cause, argues, that no writer of the new Testa-  
 ment gives Christ the title of Priest but the  
 author of this epistle to the Hebrews: And  
 surely says he, *si Christus propriè sacerdotis*  
*personam sustineret*, they would never have  
 passed over a thing of that moment in silence;  
 (Volke. lib. 3. Cap. 38.) and in another  
 place affirms that he is called a Priest, *figurato*  
*analogicoque dicendi genere*. And here they  
 triumph, and well they may, for they have  
 given any man a hard task who will go about  
 to prove that our Saviour, now in heaven, is  
 any other than a Priest by analogy. It is this  
 gives those men that advantage in this, as  
 well as in other parts of this mystery of  
 our redemption; they give us things to prove  
 that are impossible; and when we fail of it,  
 then they think their consequences true. All  
 that is yet asserted is so far from being dis-  
 proved, that it is to be granted them. No  
 doubt there is a figure and analogy at the bot-  
 tom of this matter, but they have fatally mis-  
 taken it.

And therefore, now we are to consider  
 wherein this trope, and figure, and analogy  
 which they dwell so much upon consists.  
 They say the allusion is all to his kingly of-  
 fice, which they contend to be proper and not  
 figurative, *he having received all power in*  
*heaven and earth*: But he is said to be a Priest  
 only in allusion to that; and there is no real  
 difference between his kingly and priestly of-  
 fice. When the author to the Hebrews, says



SERM. Volkelius, *qui figurato orationis genere valde*

XI. *delectatur*, calls him a Priest, he means no more by it than what is signified by his kingly office. (Volke. l. 3. cap. 28.) If you ask why he should be called a Priest at all, even in a figure, one will tell you that, by this means, his dependence and subordination to God may be sufficiently signified to us, and will make this an argument against his divinity: Another, that Christ's willingness to exercise his kingly office in all respects to our advantage may be fully expressed: Another says, his death and expiation is more particularly intimated by his priestly office; and yet they flatly deny his death to be a proper sacrifice, or that the expiation is any thing more than delivering us from sin and punishment, by his kingly power. This is the only foundation of that trope or figure, by which they will allow him to be a Priest; which they hold to be nothing in reality; because, that in truth, there is no difference between this and his kingly office: And yet, his being a *King* is as analogical as his being a *Priest*.

But, as I said before, this is a fatal mistake of the analogy; for there is no other analogy here than what is necessary, in order to our conceptions of all divine things; of which we can have no immediate, direct, and proper conceptions; and therefore are forced to conceive and speak of them by such as are borrowed, and carry in them that similitude or proportion, which the wisdom of God hath seen

seen most suitable to our present frail and imperfect condition. As the sanctuary is said in the text to be but a figure of the true holy place, the highest heavens, where the more immediate presence of God is; so likewise the High-Priest among the Jews was but a figure of the true High-Priest in heaven. The Priest, and temple, and blood sprinkled before the mercy seat, as the Apostle argues, were all but patterns of the things in the heavens; faint representations of things we have not the least ideas of, any otherwise than by trope and metaphor, as the Socinians speak at every turn.

The word High-Priest, in the execution of this greatest act of his ministry, signifies a frail mortal man, in a linen coat and breeches, having a mitre on his head; going into a chamber made with hands, with the blood of a beast in a vessel, and sprinkling it before a seat: This is the proper and immediate notion of the word Priest. And should any one go about to form a notion of the eternal priesthood, and sacerdotal office of Christ in heaven, from hence, he may as well form a notion of a glorified body, nay of the glory and perfections of the Godhead, from this gross flesh and blood. He may form a notion of heaven from a chamber made of wood; and of the manner of communication between the persons of the holy and ever blessed Trinity, from the manner of conversation

SERM. among men. We no more know the true  
 XI. nature of his office than of that heavenly  
 { place that he is entered into.

So that now we see the true point in difference, between us and the Socinians, is not whether the sacerdotal office of Christ, now in heaven, be in itself proper or analogical ; in which they have laid out all their strength, and therefore are to begin anew ; for this is granted them : But the true question is this, whether the person and office of Christ in heaven, and his mediation in our behalf, be not expressed in scripture by the words High-Priest ; and represented to us under the notion of a man singled out and appointed by God for that very purpose, that he should enter into the tabernacle yearly, in a particular dress, with blood in his hands, to make atonement and expiation for the sins of the people ? And though all this be figurative and analogical, whether something real and divine be not signified and intended by them ? Whether some heavenly things be not in reality signified to us by those patterns and figures ? And whether, in this particular instance, something distinct be not intended from his kingly office, whatever it is.

And now the controversy is plainly upon this foot, the matter will hardly admit of a difficulty ; for nothing is plainer in scripture, than that the person and office of Christ in heaven, and his mediation for us is expressed  
 by



by the word and office of a Priest. Heb. v. 6. SER M.  
 the author quotes that text, out of the 110 XI.

Pfalm, as a prophecy of Christ, *thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech:*

A Priest of a particular order of God's own more immediate appointment; as it is in the 4th. verse of this chapter, *no man takes this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* After this he enters into a long discourse concerning the nature and excellency of this priesthood, and repeats this same text at least four times over. The spirit of God foresaw this dangerous error would be propagated in time, and in this epistle hath fully provided against it; which seems to be on purpose designed and levelled against it. The Apostle shews the excellency of his Priesthood, beyond that of the Jewish High-Priest, in several instances; as that the Priests of that order were many, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but Christ was made a Priest *after the power of an endless life*; i. e. after an order which required no succession. The whole order of Aaron was but temporary, and was to be superseded by another priesthood: But Christ's was to remain for ever an unchangeable priesthood. Again, the law made men High-Priests which have infirmity, frail sinful men; but Christ was made a High-Priest undefiled, and higher than the heavens. Those Priests were made without an oath, by the ordinary appointment of God; but this was made

SERM. with an oath, by him that said unto him, *the*  
 XI. *Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a*  
 { *Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech.*

And thus the first part of the question I think is undeniably true, that the person and office of Christ is expressed in scripture, by the name of Priest: The next thing is whether something real be not signified and intended by it. And here I am to note another excellency of our Saviour's priesthood, beyond that of the order of Aaron; and that is Heb. viii. 5. that those priests served only unto the example, and shadow of heavenly things; whereas on the contrary, he serves to the reality and substance of those heavenly things signified to us, and represented by them. God is pleased to represent to us what Christ doth for us now in heaven, by the performances of a frail mortal man upon earth; and can there be any consequence clearer than this, that therefore the High-Priest himself was but an example and shadow of Christ, who was the reality and substance.

Now, because all this is signified to us only by figure and analogy, it doth not follow that there is nothing of truth and reality in it; but rather the quite contrary; namely, that he is more strictly our High-Priest to all intents and purposes, than if he had been literally and properly a High-Priest of the order of Aaron. The word and the thing, the man and his office were all but shadows  
 and

and examples to exprefs somewhat beyond our comprehension in the heavens: So that it is they are tropes, and figures, and metaphors; the office and the performances of Christ are the reality. Crellius, who ſaw the analogy, but miſtook the foundation of it, hath an excellent ſentence to this purpoſe. (Crell. Reſpon. ad Grot. cap. 10.) *Quemadmodum vocabula plurima ab hominibus rebusque humanis ad Deum reſque divinas translata, præſtantius ac divinius quippiam denotare ſolent, quam cum de hominibus humaniſve rebus uſurpantur, licet de his propriè, de illis impropriè dicantur: Ita etiam nomen Pontificis ad Chriſtum Dominum noſtrum cœleſtem ac divinum translatum, in ipſo præſtantius quippiam ac divinius denotare, quam in illis; adeo ut, quantum divina humanis, cœleſtia terrenis, tantum ſacerdotium Chriſti illorum ſacerdotio præſtet, licet iſtud figuratè, hoc propriè ſic appelletur.* One who doth not ſee what goes before or after would think he means what I have been ſaying, and that he hath expreſſed it to great advantage: How this prieſthood of Chriſt, though it be in itſelf figurative, yet is deſigned to ſignify ſomething to us more divine and excellent than we can imagine; and as much beyond our comprehension as the heavens are above the earth. Inſtead of this, he argues that it ſignifies nothing in itſelf, nothing diſtinct from his kingly office; and that it is for the honour and dignity of Chriſt it ſhould be ſo; becauſe it can ſignify nothing in itſelf



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but what is below him, and unbecoming the glorious condition he is now in; this will be considered afterwards. But here we may observe, that there is no other figure or analogy in his Priestly office than there is in his kingly office. *His kingdom is not of this world.* The words King and Kingdom are as full of analogy, as Priest and Priesthood; and they give us as figurative, and improper conceptions of the truth and reality of that power and dominion, by which he is now *over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.* And yet it would be the very same way of arguing to infer, that therefore his kingly office signifies nothing in reality and substance, and is only by way of allusion to the power of God, which, according to them, he hath only by deputation.

And now the fallacy that deceived them is visible; they saw there was a figure and analogy, but mistook the allusion, and therefore use that as an argument against us, which, being rightly considered, places the truth in the clearest sunshine: For the case is thus; these two offices are attributed to Christ, the holy scriptures denote and describe them both very expressly and distinctly; only that it dwells longer upon the priestly office, and is much more particular and solemn in the description of it. They both are figurative and analogical, they are in the Apostle's language *patterns and figures of heavenly things.* This doth not hinder but that they both do signify and express something real in heaven.

Then

Then the last part of the question is, whe- S E R M.  
ther they signify something distinct? And XI.  
they say no, for that they signify the same  
thing; and that one of them is real, and the  
other figurative: But they are for ever con-  
futed by asking this short question, how do  
they know this? What mortal man dare af-  
firm this? And say there is no distinction in  
things unconceivable and incomprehensible to  
us now; i. e. in things wherein it is impos-  
sible for us to know whether there is or no?  
This can be no question between us, whether  
they are distinguished in heaven? But whe-  
ther God hath made a difference here upon  
earth? If God hath made that distinction be-  
tween them in the holy scriptures, what man  
will venture to affirm that it is not real, when  
it is as impossible for him to know as to  
comprehend the divine nature? We find a  
manifest difference and distinction made; it is  
our business to take it so, and not to argue  
most acutely that it cannot be so in heaven.

Having thus shewn how Christ is our High-  
Priest, and more really and truly one than  
the High-Priest was among the Jews; I shall  
now proceed to the consideration of what he  
doth in our behalf, now he hath entered into  
the true tabernacle, heaven itself, to appear in  
the presence of God for us: And here I shall  
proceed in the same method, by giving a  
plain account of the Socinian doctrine in this  
point, and by that means coming to a right  
state of the question.

They

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They every where assert, that the oblation of Christ is performed only in heaven; for in the anniversary sacrifice of expiation, they say, there is no mention of any oblation till the blood was brought into the sanctuary. They make the oblation and intercession of Christ to be altogether the same thing. *Interpellatio* (Crell. resp. ad Grot. cap. 10. p. 227.) *ab oblatione pro nobis perpetuo durante, reipsâ non differt.* They make both the oblation and intercession to be nothing real or proper, but all figure and allusion. *Sunt modi loquendi de Christo non proprii sed figurati, quod scilicet Christus oret, seu interpellat pro nobis.* (Socin. in 1 John ii. 12.) Volkelius says it is *figuratus dicendi modus, cum Christus pro nobis interpellare dicitur.* (Vol. de Ingress. Chr. in Taber.) And this is what they all insist upon, resolving it all into figure and analogy; and then turn the difficulty upon us, to prove that it is a proper intercession. I must confess they have given any man a hard task that undertakes it; and it is much more for our own ease, and the advantage of the truth, to grant them the analogy, and then bid them go on; and prove that nothing real and distinct can possibly be designed or comprehended under it: And then we shall be even with them; this will put them upon a plain impossibility, because this can never be proved without a direct and comprehensive knowledge of the true and real nature of God, and of Christ, *as he is.*

The



The question between them and us in this point is not, whether the word intercession, and the thing expressed by it, be a figure and analogy? For it certainly is so. When we name the word intercession among men, the notion immediately rises up in our mind of one man's using his interest with another in behalf of a third person, by prayer, or argument, and the urging such motives in his behalf as are likeliest to prevail: But when we raise our thoughts from these worldly objects, and the language in use among us, to those heavenly things revealed to us by intervention of them, and look up to take a direct view, we discern nothing distinctly, our sight is dissipated and lost in an immense void. This intercession is in its own nature a profound and unsearchable mystery, and we have not the least glympse of the true nature and manner of it; we think and speak of it as improperly as we do of Christ, or of God, when we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. Intercession is as much a figure as sitting, or a right hand; and therefore what Crellius says upon this is very true, *Impropria propriis apponuntur tanquam perfectiora et præstantiora imperfectioribus et minus præstantibus.* (Crell. Resp. ad Grot. cap. 10. p. 23.) And he takes great advantage of Grotius's not making this confession. *Grotius eam introitum de precibus propriè dictis procul dubio accepit. Oblatio, says he, id hic præstat, quod alibi preces.* And

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again,

SERM. again, *quod verò Grotius ait Christum inter-*  
 XI. *pellare toties quoties opus est, quasi Christi actio*  
*nunc cesset nunc denuò repetatur, id nusquam*  
*legitur.* (Crell. Resp. ad Grot. cap. 10. p.  
 227.) They all proceed upon the same suppo-  
 sition, and take a great deal of pains to prove  
 what we readily own; it is all beside the  
 question, which is,

Whether that act of mediation of Christ in  
 heaven for us, be not revealed to us in Scrip-  
 ture by the word intercession, and that notion  
 which the mention of it naturally raises in  
 our mind when we hear it. *Rom. viii. 34.*  
*it is said that Christ is at the right hand of God,*  
*who also makes intercession for us;* the words are  
*ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, he pleads, or manages, or  
 makes intercession for us; as in the xi. 2. of  
 this same epistle *ἐντυγχάνει κατὰ*. signifies he ac-  
 cuses; this word is here used to signify  
 Christ's mediation for us, as those words *at*  
*the right hand of God* are used to signify to  
 us the great prevalence and efficacy of that  
 mediation. The same words are used, *Heb.*  
*vii. 25.* Again, *1 John ii. 1.* it is said, *we*  
*have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ*  
*the righteous;* *παράκλητος*, one that pleads, or  
 manages our cause before either a publick  
 tribunal, or to a person singly: And here in  
 the words of the text it is said, *that Christ is*  
*not entered into the holy places made with*  
*hands, which are the figures of the true; but*  
*into heaven itself to appear in the presence of*  
 God

*God for us.* It is plain here that the sanctuary SERM.  
was a figure of heaven, the High-Priest and XI.

the sacrifice a type of Christ; the sprinkling of the blood a ceremony designed by God, on purpose to signify and represent to us, under a visible appearance, something that Christ doth for us in heaven; and whatever that is, it is not only expressed to us in words, but it is typified by an annual institution performed with great solemnity. And therefore for to say, that nothing in reality and substance in heaven is signified by it, is to say that nothing in reality or substance is signified by any thing that is revealed to us: Can all this be designed to signify nothing more than the desire and good inclination of Christ, to take care of us? Was the sprinkling of the blood in the sanctuary designed only to signify the desire and care of the High-Priest, to free the people from the punishment of their sins? Then indeed there might be some colour for an argument.

Now this is the true analogy and figure, couched in this doctrine, of that heavenly oblation and intercession, made for us by Christ at the right hand of God; which the Socinians have so grievously mistaken, and made it only an allusion to what he doth for us as a King. Volkelius speaking of these expressions says, (Volk. lib. 3. cap. 38. p. 377.) *Quæ omnia verba ad Christi regnum translata sunt, per similitudinem.* And the argument




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ment they all insist upon is the same that he there uses, *ad Christum figurato orationis genere ista omnia transferri ex eo perspicitur, quod qui verè proprièque interpellat, &c.* He that intercedes literally and properly to another, shews that what he asks is not in his own power; but *all power is given to Christ in heaven and in earth*, and for the same reason says Crellius of Christ, *cur Deum adhuc verè oret et preces apud ipsum interponat, ut peccata nobis remittere velit.* And they insist mightily upon it, how mean a thing praying and interceding is, and how unbecoming they are of the glorious condition of Christ in heaven, insomuch that Crellius (Resp. ad Grot. cap. 10.) argues how much more their opinion is for the honour of Christ than ours, *Improprietas illa, quam nos appellationi huic quatenus ad Christum refertur subesse credimus, muneris hujus dignitatem auget.*

The answer is short and ready, we do not say that he intercedes properly and literally for us, we think kneeling, and bowing, and praying as much below him as they do; but we think it no way conclusive, that because he doth nothing of this nature, therefore he doth not intercede for us; we acknowledge this to be a mystery, and receive it as such, and submit our reason to this divine revelation, as we do in other instances. That it is a revealed doctrine of Christianity I think is past dispute; but the reason and the necessity of this intercession with respect to God or man; what

what is the real nature and true manner of SERM.  
it; what sort of application our Saviour makes; XI.  
and what is the language of that blood which   
*speaks better things than that of Abel*, we are  
utterly ignorant; nor can we discern what  
similitude or correspondence there is in the  
analogy. All this is far above our reach; and  
we must leave these things to the positive  
determination of those sages who are so in-  
timately acquainted with the secret councils  
of God, and have such a sharp discerning eye  
of reason, that they can see through the  
darkness of this world, into the regions of  
light and glory; and then can look down  
again with contempt upon the whole chris-  
tian world, for so many ages, that could  
never make the discovery before. I must  
confess it is much for the credit of their parts  
if they are in the right; but it is very fatal  
to their Salvation if they should chance to be  
in the wrong. As for us, we are not wil-  
ling to run such a hazard; and therefore hop-  
ing that they will not be too insulting, I will  
make them one concession farther, namely  
that we know not in truth how this inter-  
cession differs from the exercise of his kingly  
office; we weak-sighted creatures do find this  
distinction made in the holy scriptures, and  
therefore we believe there may be a difference  
in heaven.

And now can any thing be more glaring  
and evident, than the fallacy that deceived  
them? Because they saw there was a trope and  
figure

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figure in it, therefore it can be nothing in reality: And because it is nothing in reality, therefore the allusion must be to his kingly office, that being more for the honour and dignity of our Saviour. But in the name of God, how do they know that it is more for his honour? Let them tell me what this intercession is, and what the execution of his kingly office is, and then let them decide which is most for his honour. It is as much below him to exercise any part of the office of a king, according to the most exalted notion we have of that dignity; and therefore why may not I argue just as they do, and say that therefore this can be nothing in reality? But they will say governing in any sense is beyond interceding; true, but this doth not hinder them from being united in one divine person. But how can God intercede to himself? We do not know; this is mystery; there are two natures in Christ, and this may be without contradiction or absurdity. If things of this nature are to be decided by putting cross questions, I hope I may ask them just such another: The text they argue from is, Math. xxvi. 18. *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth*: How can this be? If so, they must either allow that there is none left for the father, now he hath parted with all out of his own hands; or that Jesus Christ is of the same nature with the father. When they get over this, I will answer them  
the



the other question. If they say he hath only S E R M.  
divided the power with him, then they will XI.  
make two independent Gods. If they say  
that he is deputed over all as a courtier by a  
king, this cannot be, because the reason of  
a minister of state is, to supply the infir-  
mity and inability of a monarch to discharge  
the business of a kingdom. If they own all  
power is given him, but with some depend-  
ence upon the father; then they will be forced  
to own that there may be intercession in some  
sense or other, though they know not how.  
And sure I am, the consistency of this inter-  
cession with the dignity of Christ, is much  
easier to conceive, than how the divine power  
can be communicated to another, without  
any communication of the divine essence:  
For power in God is not what it is in men;  
one man may give his authority and power  
to another, because it is nothing real in him-  
self; but it is hard to imagine how one man  
may give the strength of his own body, or  
wisdom of his mind to another: And yet the  
difficulty is infinitely greater, how any of the  
divine attributes, such as almighty power,  
should be communicated, and not the essence  
that is almighty.

Now at the same time we acknowledge  
this intercession to be an unfathomable my-  
stery to us in this world, yet whatever the  
true and real nature of it is, thus much is  
plainly revealed to us concerning it; that it is  
founded in the virtue and unspeakable efficacy

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of that blood of Christ, which was shed upon the cross. This is as expressly revealed, and as circumstantially typified, as-if it were with design to secure this doctrine from error, and be a standing confutation of all those whom the spirit of God foresaw should deny it. In the great anniversary sacrifice, which the Socinians cannot deny to be a type of Christ, the High-Priest was to carry the blood of the sacrifice into the most holy place, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and before it, the place where God was present in a more peculiar manner: And this was to make atonement for sin and for uncleanness; and this they acknowledge to be a type of that oblation made by Christ in heaven. That there is no sprinkling of blood in heaven is very certain, nor doth this give us the least notion of that heavenly intercession of Christ; yet nothing can be plainer than that, whatever is the true manner of it, it derives its virtue and efficacy from the blood of Christ, which was shed here on earth: And that which makes that ceremony yet fuller of significancy to this purpose is, that part of the sacrifice was reserved to be burnt after the sprinkling of the blood in the sanctuary, and that the Priest had come out of it; as it were on purpose to shew that the virtue of atonement was from the death of the sacrifice, and shedding of the blood; and that there could be no oblation of Christ in heaven distinct from

from the effusion of his blood upon the cross: SERM.

And in 1 John ii. 1, 2. where it is said, XI.

*we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous*; it is immediately added; *who is the propitiation for our sins*; to intimate wherein this power and prevalency of his intercession consists. In Heb. xii. 24. the Apostle gives it as one instance of the happiness and privilege of christians, that *they are come to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel*: They are made partakers of this powerful intercession, made through the virtue of that blood which is said to be sprinkled in the presence of God for us, and is of infinitely greater efficacy than the sacrifice of Abel which was the first type of Christ.

So that nothing can be plainer revealed to us than that this intercession is made for us through the unconceivable virtue of that blood that was spilt upon the cross for us. The continual presence of that body in the sight of God, which was crucified for us, is a very powerful motive, and full of persuasion with God to obtain mercy and redemption for us. As he *offered one sacrifice for sins for ever*, this being of sufficient virtue in itself, there was no occasion for another, or repeating the same; and therefore he is said to be ever interceding for us, because the virtue of this sacrifice will never cease, but remain for ever a motive of eternal efficacy with God. We know not by what sort of rhetorick and



perswasion this blood prevails; it is something beyond the language of men and Angels to exprefs, and perhaps fully to comprehend: Our business is to acquiesce in the revelation, and leave the manner of it to be the object of our faith and thanksgiving here, and of our prayers and delightful contemplation in another world.

Wherefore let all such, who would find a real benefit and advantage by the revelations of the Gospel, believe firmly that God hath a real and substantial meaning in them; let them look with an eye of faith, and behold our Saviour sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for them.

Let those despisers of our christian mysteries shew us any ground of comfort like this; and if they can shew us none beside, then why do they let their hearts carry them away, and what do their eyes wink at; as if we were speaking into the air, and only telling a dream? Why do they thus turn their spirit against God, and his revelations; as if they had found out some surer dependance of their own, and stood upon firmer grounds than we do? Our whole trust is in the merits of a sacrifice of infinite value, which is our ransom; they say they neither desire, nor want such a sacrifice or ransom; they can discharge their own debt. Our dependence is upon the mediation of a divine person; they have no occasion for him, they can manage their own cause. We dare not address ourselves

ourselves to God but in the name, and by the intercession of another; they will offer up their prayers in their own name, and go directly to God without him. We bless God for the revelation of these mysteries; they will receive nothing but from their own reason. The mediation and intercession of Christ is all the comfort we have; we glory in it; it is the support and comfort of our desponding souls; they affirm it is but a meer word, a metaphor; and it hath nothing of reality in it.

And therefore thou, O Lord Jesus, regard the supplications of thy servants that are offered up in thy name; be it unto us according to thy word, and in thy own good time manifest thy truth; thy word is truth, wherein thou hast caused us to put our trust. We acknowledge that God cannot look upon us but through thy merits, nor dare we offer up a prayer but in thy name, through thy merits and intercession. Make us therefore to know, and feel the power of it; and how that there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can receive health and salvation, but only that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## S E R M O N XII.

Christ came to fulfil the Law.

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MATTH. v. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

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**T**HE strongest prejudice that lies against any revelation or doctrine is that of its novelty; that it discovers itself all at once, without any connexion with former revelations, or dependence upon them; and especially if it be contradictory to any thing ever revealed before, or to the natural sentiments of reason: For this makes God inconsistent with himself, who is immutable and the same forever. The Scribes and Pharisees saw the force of this objection, but they applied it wrong, John ii. 29. *we know, say they, that God spake unto Moses, but as for this fellow we know not from whence he is:* Though  
Christ



Christ allowed the law, and the prophets to SERM. be from God; though he argued from them, XII. and appealed to them at every turn, and allowed them all the force of divine revelations; yet they had a colour for the contrary, and that was enough for the spirit of calumny: And therefore they gave it out among the people, that the design of his preaching was to lessen the authority of Moses and the prophets; to render them null and void, and of no signification, insomuch that they crucified him as a destroyer of what he came into the world to compleat and improve. For he tells us, in the words of the text, he came *not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them.*

And it is the greatest demonstration of christianity that he did so, and of the excellency of the Gospel. For thus it appears that what he taught was not totally concealed before, but a full and clear revelation of what had been delivered from the beginning, and opened by degrees in the several ages of the world, as men were capable of receiving it, and the exigencies of mankind required it: So that the revelations of the Gospel are so far from being contrary to any thing known by nature or revelation before, that they are pursuant to it; and they all combine together, to make up one continued dispensation of providence for the salvation of man. The Gospel is in truth the filling up and intire comple-  
tion

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tion of all that ever was suggested by natural light, or divine tradition from the creation of the world to the fulness of time.

Now this raises such an evidence of the truth and excellency of christianity as no imposture is capable of; for if it have not such proof of its coming from God, as no meer human institution hath, or can have; and if its doctrine and principles do not transcend all that can be known or practised by the light of nature, then it can claim no pre-eminence beyond all other religions; which puts the matter to a short issue with Jews, and Heathens, or Moralists.

This is what I propose from those words, concerning which it will be necessary to premise, that by the law is meant here both the ceremonial, and the moral part of the law of Moses: So that the natural order of treating of them seems to be this.

1. To consider how, and in what sense Christ came to fulfil the ceremonial law.

2. How he came to fulfil the moral law, or the law of nature.

3. How he came to fulfil the Prophets.

I shall at present confine myself to the first of these, namely to consider how Christ came to fulfil the ceremonial law of Moses, which was all typical and representative of him.

Now in order to make it appear that Christ was the end of the ceremonial law, i. e. that the whole design and intent of it was to be a figure and representation of him; and by  
that

that means to be a demonstration of his divine mission when he came, I shall instance only in these three particulars. SERM.  
XII.

I. The structure of the Jewish tabernacle built by Moses in the wilderness, fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ.

II. The great anniversary sacrifice performed in it, the most solemn rite of the Jewish religion, and instituted at the same time.

III. The celebration of the feast of the passover, appointed at the deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Each of which is so contrived for that end, and calculated with such exactness and nicety to prefigure and represent the coming of our Saviour, that there is not the least room left for doubt; it is demonstration and full conviction to all who will weigh and consider them; those who will not must remain in doubting and infidelity; and that infidelity will be fatal. And it must ever be remembered, that God never proposes the convincing of any man's judgment, or the saving of his soul, who will not be at the pains to consider.

I. The first thing I am to speak to is the structure of the Jewish tabernacle, which was a building, not by any voluntary dedication, but by God's immediate command and appointment; and the only one instance of any building raised by immediate appointment and revelation from heaven, except that of the




SERM. the temple, built in pursuance of the same  
 XII. model and design. It was not left to the prudence and contrivance of men, but Exod. xxv. 9. Moses was to make it according to all that God had shewed him, according to the pattern of the tabernacle he saw in the mount; every minute part of it, and every thing contained in it, was perfectly represented to him in a pattern; which shewed that something extraordinary was intended by it, and of great importance to mankind; and that was no less than the typifying the salvation of man by the death of Christ, and the full revelation of the great mystery of our redemption in him. It consisted of three parts, the outmost was the court of the people, the next the sanctuary, the last and inmost recess was the holy of holies.

In the first court was the altar of burnt offerings, which were all an emblem of that one great sacrifice which was to satisfy for the sins of the world. The whole custom of sacrifices could not possibly have any other signification; and the constant use of burning them could not imply any thing else but to denote the fiery wrath and indignation of God against the sins of men, in the person of him who was to bear them in his own body. I say the wit of man can give no other rational account of the custom of burnt offerings, which prevailed so universally till the time of Christ. This altar was placed in the outer court, to represent the death and passion of Christ,

Christ, which was to be effected by the rage S E R M.  
and fury of the people ; at the very door of XII.  
the court, and directly over against the en-  
trance into the sanctuary, to shew that no  
service could be performed acceptably to God  
but through the merits of that great sacrifice.  
As the laver was placed in the same court to  
denote the washing away the guilt of our  
sins through the virtue of that sacrifice, with-  
out which we could never have appeared in  
the presence of God.

In the sanctuary, just before the entrance  
into the most holy place, stood the altar of  
incense, which was an emblem Revel. viii. 3.  
*of the prayers of all Saints: And the smoke of  
the incense, which came with the prayers of the  
Saints,* represented how they were sanctified  
and rendered acceptable to God, through the  
merits and virtue of that typical blood, which  
was ordered in the great anniversary to be put  
*upon the horns of this altar round about.* Levit.  
xvi. 18. And the fire which came down upon  
it from heaven denoted that operation of the  
holy spirit, which assists our infirmities and  
sanctifies all our services ; both which very  
aptly represented that pure sacrifice under the  
Gospel, described by Malachi, i. 11. *when in  
every place among the Gentiles incense should  
be offered unto the name of God; and a pure  
offering.* On the one side stood the candle-  
stick with seven branches, to signify the clear  
revelation of the will of God: And on the  
other over against it, the table of shew bread,  
or

SERM. or bread of the presence; the intent and reason of which the Jews, and particularly XII.  Maimonides, declare themselves utterly ignorant of; (Patr. on Exod. xxv. 30) but now we naturally conceive to have been a continual emblem of that sacramental bread, which is now under the Gospel become the symbol of the body of Christ. There were twelve distinct portions, to express the right and interest of the twelve tribes of Israel, in that bread which was to come down from heaven; and yet the people were not to eat of it, but the priests only; for the same reason that they were forbid to eat of any sacrifice offered for their sins, that being a privilege reserved for the times of the Gospel. Thus the sanctuary with the furniture seems to me to be a representation of that pure evangelical service, which was to succeed that of the legal sacrifices.

But now we are come to the most holy place of all, which in the opinion of the ancient Jews was a type of Heaven; as the former they looked upon to be an image of this visible world. It was a received opinion among them that the design of God in the frame of that structure was to instruct them by a faint similitude and representation of heavenly things. And this was the occasion of that odd notion of theirs that when Moses made a tabernacle upon earth, the Angels made another in Heaven (Buxtorf. Histor. arcæ,



arcæ. p. 83.) Philo often calls the tabernacle S E R M.  
of the Jews τὸ χειροποίητον, and says it was a XII.  
shadow or resemblance τῷ ἀρχετύπῳ, of the ori-  
ginal in Heaven, (Legis alleg. l. 2. p. 61. 6.)  
and he distinguishes between the τὰ δρώμενα ἐκ τῆς  
ἀψύχου καὶ φθαρτῆς δημιουργηθέντα ἱλλης, i. e. the *visible*  
*things of the tabernacle made of inanimate and*  
*corruptible matter*; and τὰ ἀόρατα, καὶ τὰ νοητὰ θεωρή-  
ματα, the *invisible and intellectual ideas*, of  
which the other were the images. (L. de  
Temul. p. 202. A. B.) And yet upon the  
principles of that learned Jew, all this curio-  
sity and niceness was to no purpose; since  
neither he nor any other Jew can assign what  
those invisible and heavenly things are which  
were thus represented. Were it not for chris-  
tianity they must acknowledge it was all to  
no purpose; and if God had any designs or  
end extraordinary in that building besides this,  
they are all defeated by the ruin and destruc-  
tion both of temple and tabernacle. The  
heavenly things represented and typified are  
very accountable from the Gospel; and that  
with so much truth and exactness that the  
heart of the greatest zealot among the Jews  
could not wish for a more full and exact com-  
pletion of the whole intent and design of  
them.

I. This Holy of Holies was closed in and  
separated from the sanctuary by a veil, so that  
none might enter into it but the High-Priest  
only, and he but on one day a year. None  
was so much as to look into it; which was  
so

SERM. so superstitiously observed that, on that great  
 XII. day when he entered into it, the very Priests  
 and Levites who attended the work of the sanctuary were obliged to retire 'till he came out of it again, Levit. xvi. 17. lest they might perchance cast an eye into it as the High-Priest went in or came out : The plain and natural meaning of which could be no other than that this most holy place, and what was contained in it was as yet mystery, and in a great degree obscured from the understanding of men; and to continue so till that veil was removed, and that the whole intent and signification of it was to be some time or other fully revealed and understood. For otherwise all this must be owned to have been nothing more than solemn trifling and useless amusement : But that it was not so the Gospel only can demonstrate, by which all this is unfolded, and which lays this whole œconomy open to the view of all men. So that by that obscurity of the most sacred rites of that religion was plainly signified, that mankind was to expect a fuller revelation of the will of God; and that these were the types and resemblances of what was to be more perfectly revealed by the glorious light of the Gospel. The High-Priest, who alone was to enter into this type of heaven, was a lively emblem of Christ, who was to be our great High-Priest after the order of Melchizedeck, i. e. for ever, without succession of any other. The closeness of this veil and exclusion of all mankind from a sight

fight into it, shewed that the way into Heaven was not yet opened to men; and that it was not to be opened but by that person who was represented by the High-Priest. His not going in without blood shews plainly that the way into Heaven was to be obtained no other way than by shedding of that blood which was then typified.

But above all the ark, and propitiatory or mercy seat over it was so perfect an emblem and glaring indication of the salvation of man by Christ, and the forgiveness of sins in him, that it cannot enter into the heart of man either to give it another turn with any colour of reason; or to conceive how it could be more exactly typified. In the ark, which was an emblem of the law, was lodged, not only the ten commandments, Exod. xxv. 16. the moral part of the law, but probably the ceremonial part of it. (See Patrick on Exod. xxv. 16.) The mercy seat was most exactly fitted to be a covering for it; which plainly imported that pardon of our transgressions of the law of God consequent to faith and repentance under the Gospel; in allusion to which those scripture phrases of *hiding and covering our sins* are spoken, and for which offences there was no room for mercy under the law. And the two Cherubims with wings extended over them both, their faces to one another, significantly expressed that mutual respect which both the law and Gospel have to one another.

This



SERM. This *ἱλαστήριον* (i. e.) propitiatory or seat of  
 XII. mercy, was an emblem of the throne of God,  
 who in allusion to it is said to be set between  
 the Cherubims, Psalm lxxx. 2. Here the more  
 immediate presence of God was, the Sche-  
 chinah or glory of his spirit conspicuous in a  
 visible appearance; which was one of the  
 things wanting in the second temple. And  
 God by this resemblance was said to *dwell with*  
*men*. And therefore, Psalm xxvi. 8. the ta-  
 bernacle is called the place of the habitation of  
 God's glory. The whole design of which  
 was to prefigure and adumbrate that divine  
 person of Christ, who was to assume our hu-  
 man nature and dwell with us in a visible  
 shape, to which the name Emmanuel alludes,  
*God with us*; and that other expression that  
*in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily*,  
 i. e. in a visible appearance among men.

Here it was that God, *Exod. xxv. 22.* says  
 to Moses, *I will meet with thee, and I will*  
*commune with thee from above the mercy seat,*  
*from between the two Cherubims, of all the*  
*things which I will give thee in commandment*  
*unto the children of Israel.* This was the oracle  
 which they were to consult in all things re-  
 lating to the will of God, wherein the law  
 could not inform them, which was to repre-  
 sent that person, who was to be the light  
*that lightens every man that cometh into the*  
*world*, and who in an audible and human  
 voice was to deliver us a full and complete re-  
 velation of the whole will of God; so that  
 there

there should be no need of any farther revelation; and the manner of it by the familiar conversation of one in our own likenets, is fully signified, *Exod. xxxiii. 11.* where it is said, that when Moses went into the tabernacle, *the Lord spake unto him face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.* And lastly, before this seat of mercy it was, that the blood of the great anniversary sacrifice, offered for all the sins of the people, was sprinkled; most significantly to express the unconceivable virtue and divine efficacy of that blood of Christ, in the presence of God in heaven, which was shed here on earth; as the legal sacrifice was slain without the sanctuary; which by the way lays open that grand sophism of the Socinians, that the oblation of the sacrifice of Christ's death was in heaven, and not on earth; the delusion arises from the ambiguity of the word oblation, which signifies two distinct things which they confound: For it signifies both the death of the sacrifice, or shedding of the blood, which was performed here on earth; and the virtue and efficacy of it with God, for atonement and propitiation for our sins, which is performed in heaven; and typified after a most lively manner by the blood sprinkled before the seat of mercy in the most holy place, which was an emblem of heaven.

Now that all this might be more expressive and apparent to the great ends it was designed

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by God, when the tabernacle was finished and raised, *Exod. xl. 34. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle: And during their journey through the wilderness verse 38. the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night,* to be a visible demonstration of the great weight and importance of those things, which were thus typified and represented by the whole structure and contrivance of it, and by the service daily performed in it: These were no less than *patterns of the things in the heavens*, as the Apostle calls them, *Heb. ix. 33.* and an emblem of that sanctuary, and the true tabernacle of which Christ was to be the minister.

The Temple built by Solomon was pursuant to the same model and design; and there being a court in it for the Gentiles shewed plainly, that the structure of the temple, and the legal services performed in it, had respect to all the nations of the earth as well as the Jews: There being a partition wall between them, shewed the necessity there was to distinguish the posterity of Abraham, for a time, from the rest of mankind, i. e. till the promised seed came, who was to descend from that line; but now, as the Apostle remarks, *Eph. ii. 14. He hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.* And the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom,



tom, by a miraculous providence, at the very instant that Christ gave up the Ghost, was a demonstration from heaven, that the whole intent and purpose of that structure was fulfilled and compleated; that all the mysterious signification of it, and all the rites performed in it were now revealed, and the truth and substance of those shadows laid open to the view of mankind; and accordingly that there was no farther use of them, but that they were all abolished and done away.

And now you will not wonder why there were persons inspired for the workmanship both of the tabernacle Exod. xxxv. 35. and of the temple 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 19. and why the form and model of them was received by particular revelation from heaven: Nor why the same providence, which appeared so openly in the building of it, was so visible in its destruction; against the resolution of the conquerour, who was so bent upon the preservation of it: But, says their own historian, θεὸς, ἅπα θεὸς αὐτὸς, ἐπάγει μετὰ Ῥωμαίων καθάρσιον αὐτῷ τῷ. *God, even God himself, together with the Romans, applied the purging flames.* The wise contrivance of providence, and finger of God, was so visible in the structure, that it was a great argument of conviction to all people who considered it; in-somuch that Julian the apostate, who saw what a blow the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem would give to christianity, by defeating all that was predictive and typical of

SERM. our Saviour in the continuance of it; and  
 XII. who was resolved to leave no stone unturned  
 to bring it into discredit, attempted the restitution of the temple and legal service, but was prevented by balls of fire breaking out from the foundation and devouring the workmen; and it is not at all unlikely, that should it ever be again attempted with the same design, it would be prevented by a providence no less remarkable.

2. The second instance I propose to consider, was the great anniversary sacrifice appointed yearly, and on the tenth day of the seventh month, Levit. xvi. 34. which the Socinians themselves allow to be a type of Christ, who have sifted this matter thoroughly, and would have denied it if they could, as they have done of the rest. The High-Priest was to take two goats and *present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*. And to shew that it was not a thing indifferent or of little moment, but fraught with mysterious signification of some thing in the council and purpose of God, it was not left to the choice or discretion of the Priest, but was to be decided by lot, which of the two was to be sacrificed, and which to be sent away. As to the first goat, besides the resemblance of Christ which it had in common with all other expiatory sacrifices, by being a type of him who was to dye for the sins of all; there are other particulars which

which made the solemnity very expressive S E R M.  
and significant: This was to be offered by XI.  
way of atonement, not for the sins of any  
particular person, but for the whole *congre-*  
*gation of the children of Israel*; as the death  
of Christ was to be a propitiation for the  
sins of all mankind: The blood of it was to  
be sprinkled before the mercy seat; which  
was to be a lively emblem of the virtue and  
efficacy of that blood, which alone was to  
obtain mercy and forgiveness for the sins of  
men. And this was to be repeated seven  
times, according to the mysterious number  
of the Jews, to express the great weight and  
importance of what was intended and repre-  
sented by it; no less than the remission of the  
sins of men, and reconciliation of mankind  
to the justice of God. The blood was to be  
brought within the vail or the holy of holies;  
which was a part of the temple; by the parti-  
cular appointment of God, to be a type of  
heaven; which was on purpose to shew, as  
the Epistle to the Hebrews observes from the  
completion, that Christ by the shedding of  
his blood is not *entered into the holy places*  
*made with hands, which are the figures of the*  
*true*; but *into heaven itself, there to make in-*  
*tercession for us*, through the merits of that  
blood that he shed for us here: Which virtue  
of appeasing God was livelily prefigured and  
represented by that incense which was to be  
offered within the vail, at the same time that  
the blood was carried in thither, and sprinkled



SERM. before the mercy seat. Moreover the High-  
 XII. Priest using no form of words or prayer when  
 he carried in the blood, but leaving it there  
 to make the atonement of itself, by its own  
 intrinſick virtue with God; was to ſhew, that  
 the ſame perſon was to be both our great  
 High-Prieſt and our ſacrifice; and that he  
 alone could make interceſſion who ſhed his  
 blood for us: Nay more, it denotes that the  
 benefits of pardon and reconciliation are not  
 only from any power or right that Chriſt  
 hath thereby obtained to work theſe for us;  
 but that they proceed directly from the real  
 intrinſick virtue, and unconceivable merits and  
 efficacy of that very blood which was to be  
 ſhed. Surely when this was appointed, the  
 wiſdom of God foreſaw that there would in  
 after-times be a race of men who ſhould deny  
 this; and therefore it was thus purpoſely con-  
 trived, that the expiation and atonement  
 might not be attributed to any outward in-  
 terceſſion or performance whatſoever, but to  
 the intrinſick worth and value of that typified  
 blood in the preſence of God.

Again, the goat whoſe blood was carried  
 into the very holy of holies, that type of hea-  
 ven itſelf, was not however to be ſuffered ſo  
 much as within the camp, but carried quite  
 out of it, and there burnt with fire: So  
 Chriſt, whoſe blood is of unconceivable power  
 with God, and the virtue of which prevails  
 for mercy for us in his immediate preſence,

was

was however to be carried out without the city, to be made a sacrifice for us; which was accordingly literally fulfilled. This was to

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be performed by the High-Priest only, and he alone was to enter into the holy place; which represented him who was to be our *High-Priest for ever*, Heb. ix. 8. *the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was only a figure for the time then present*: Moreover, this was to be repeated yearly, by a statute for ever among them; effectually to signify, that those sacrifices *could not make the comers thereunto perfect*, Heb. x. 1. *as pertaining to conscience*, i. e. that they could not compleat their pardon, and cleanse the conscience from the inward guilt of sin; Verse the 2d. *for then would they not cease to have been offered*, says the Apostle; which is not only an argument *ad hominem*, to convince them who already believed in Christ, that those legal sacrifices must cease, because of the sacrifice of Christ being now performed: But it concludes necessarily and universally, for if those sacrifices, either by God's appointment and acceptance of them, or by any real intrinsic worth and virtue in them, obtained a full and perfect pardon of sin, there is no occasion indeed for any further sacrifice, but then they are of eternal obligation; and no reason can be assigned by man why they should cease to be offered, unless it be be-

SERM. cause of the offering of that one great sacri-  
 XII. fice, which alone was able to procure a com-  
 pleat and absolute pardon, and purge the very  
 soul and conscience from the guilt of sin.  
 If they were able to effect this then, they  
 are able to do it now; and therefore, who-  
 ever denies the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, will  
 find himself under a necessity of reviving the  
 old custom of sacrificing of beasts, which  
 hath been left off since his death, for no other  
 reason than what the Apostle assigns, Verse 4.  
*because it is not possible that the blood of bulls  
 and of goats should take away sins:* And there-  
 fore it is, that in those sacrifices there was  
*a remembrance again made of sins every year,*  
 which were never to be remembered again,  
 but totally done away, Verse 10, *through  
 the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for  
 all: For this man, after he had offered one  
 sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right  
 hand of God.*

Now if there were nothing more in this  
 great solemnity, yet its being so parallel in  
 every instance with the sacrifice of Christ's  
 death, is sufficient to shew, that it was con-  
 trived and ordained to typify and represent  
 it: But the wisdom of God hath raised it to  
 a more sublime and comprehensive significa-  
 tion of what it was to be only a shadow and  
 a forerunner; and that by the addition of  
 another goat so like the former, that the  
 Priest could hardly distinguish them; which  
 goat



goat was not to be sacrificed, but let go alive SERM.  
 into the wilderness: The meaning of which XII.  
 puzzled all the Jewish Doctors, but is now  
 plain to us christians; namely, to signify  
 that the beast that was slain could not take  
 away the guilt of sin; and that the true sa-  
 crifice, which alone was able to do that, was  
 not yet offered. And that it might be more  
 clear and full to this purpose, the High-Priest  
 Levit. xvi. 21. was to *lay both his hands*  
*upon the head of the live goat, and confess*  
*over him all the iniquities of the children of*  
*Israel, and all their transgressions in all their*  
*sins; putting them upon the head of the goat;*  
 and so send him away by the hand of a fit  
 person into the wilderness: Then it follows,  
*and the goat shall bear upon him all their ini-*  
*quities;* and why? because they were all to  
 be reserved for the propitiation and atone-  
 ment which was to be made for those sins  
 afterwards; and to shew that no legal sacri-  
 fice could take away the guilt of sin.


The transferring them from the people on  
 the goat, was to represent that divine person  
 who should in truth bear the burthen of all  
 our sins: Who, as Isaiah expresth it by a  
 spirit of prophecy, liii. *had borne our griefs,*  
*and carried our sorrows; who was wounded for*  
*our transgressions, and bruised for our iniqui-*  
*ties; the chastisement of our peace was upon*  
*him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Nay  
 the alteration of the phrase is remarkable, in  
 the

SERM. the first institution of this great anniversary,  
 XII. for it is the first goat was to be for a sin offering, i. e. of the same efficacy with other sin offerings of the like nature appointed for all the external breaches of the law. But this last is expressly said to be for an atonement ; it was to be presented alive, Verse 10. to make an atonement with him, and that too not for legal transgressions only, but all kind of sin. A new and unheard of thing this either among Jews or Heathen, that expiation and atonement, and that for all manner of sin, was to be made by a living sacrifice ; not by the beast that was slain, but by that which was sent away unhurt ; this was contrary to all that ever was received among men, who were universally of opinion that sin was to be expiated by the death of animals, and that *without blood there was no remission*. But you see for what wise and excellent purposes it was appointed in this instance, on the great day of expiation for the sins of all the people in general ; as the like ceremony was appointed in the sacrifice of the two sparrows, for the cleansing of the leprosy in a particular person, which we know is the emblem of sin : To signify that none of those sacrifices had any virtue to purge away the sins of men in general, or that of any one in particular ; any otherwise than as they were representative of that one great sacrifice, which was not yet offered.

Farther,

Farther, if Doctor Spencer's conjecture, which he so much labours, be true, that by the word in the original, Arazeel, translated *εποπομπῆς*, is meant the Devil instead of the scape goat; as if the text were to run thus, *and Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the Devil*, and that the meaning is, that one shall be sent alive to the Devil in the wilderness, the ceremony is yet more significant to this purpose: For the presenting both the goats before the Lord, shews that the great oblation and sacrifice was to be made to him; and the sending the live one to the Devil in the wilderness, was to express how that person, who truly bore the sins of mankind, was to be exposed in a great degree to the malice of the Devil: How he was to be made a curse for us, and so far given over to the power of the serpent, as to verify that prophecy of the Messiah, that the serpent should bruise the heel of that seed of the woman, which was to break his head. And lastly, that injunction upon the person who led the goat into the wilderness, Verse 26. that *he should wash his clothes and bathe his flesh*; by which it appeared that the man was actually polluted; was to shew how there was to be a true and real transferring of the guilt of sin upon the person of Christ, who was to be substituted for us. And from this persuasion it was, that the Jews tied a scarlet ribbon



SERM. XII.  ribbond upon the goat; that colour being an emblem of guilt, from the colour of innocent blood that was shed: and that they used to pursue it as it was going, with all manner of indignities; with curses and execrations, spitting at it, and wishing all their guilt and misfortunes might light upon it; after the very manner they afterwards treated him, of whom it was a representative. But not discerning the mystery and signification of it, another custom obtained among them of throwing it headlong from a rock, out of a persuasion that there could be no atonement for sin without the death of the sacrifice; and out of an apprehension that the goat might return back and pollute them all again. And now I would fain know, how it was possible to have contrived any solemnity to be more full and expressive than this.

3. But I shall now in the third place take another instance yet more clear and demonstrative, and that is that of the Paschal lamb; which was Exod. xii. 5. to be taken out from the flock, to be a representative of Christ, who took upon him our human nature, *that he might be in all things like unto us, sin only excepted*; chosen out from among men to be our passover, and to be sacrificed for us. It was to be a male, to typify the son of God: It was to be of the first year, i. e. according to the doctrine of the Jews, it was to be above eight days, and under a year old; which

which was designed a most significant emblem SERM.  
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of the meekness and humility of Christ; pursuant to which, Isaiah long after describes him being *brought as a lamb to the slaughter*, and says, that *as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*; and even this was said five hundred years before it happened. It was to be without blemish, which the Jews were so scrupulous in, that Maimonides reckons up fifty blemishes, any one of which might render a lamb unfit for this paschal sacrifice; which was plainly to prefigure that atonement was to be made by the *precious blood of Christ*, as of *a lamb without blemish and without spot*. 1 Pet. i. 19. It was to be roasted thoroughly with fire; to denote God's fiery indignation at the sins of men, which Christ was to bear upon him; and to signify those eternal flames which are the due reward of them. And it is very remarkable, that by some instinct or tradition the custom prevailed among the Jews, of roasting it upon a wooden spit, with a cross bar of wood to keep the foreleggs distended; which proved to be a perfect emblem of our Saviour's body upon the cross. The sprinkling of the blood upon their doors, that *the destroying Angel might pass over them*, and that *the plagues should not be upon them to destroy them*; was to express the virtue and efficacy of that blood, which turns away the wrath of God from us, and diverts that vengeance

SERM. geance which would otherwise fall upon our  
 XII. heads. It is true the first institution of this  
 was said to be in remembrance of their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage; but this renders it yet fuller of signification, and makes it a comprehensive emblem of our deliverance from the bondage of corruption; from the slavery of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Rom. viii. 21. Again, the haste they were to eat it in, did not unaptly represent the dispatch that was used by the Jews, in hurrying our Saviour to his death; who was apprehended, tried, condemned, and executed in the space of a few hours, between the two evenings wherein the paschal lamb was to be sacrificed. And lastly, can any thing be more expressive than the eating of the flesh of the lamb by a strict precept, contrary to what was enjoined in all other instances; that no man should eat of any sacrifice offered for his own sins, or drink the blood; which was plainly to denote the real actual communication of the virtue and merits of Christ's crucified body to us; in allusion to which he says of himself, John vi. 53. *verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

Now this annual solemnity is so full and expressive of the great mystery of our redemption by a crucified Saviour, that it cannot reasonably be doubted, whether this  
 parallel



parallel be drawn out by the wit of man, or SERM. calculated for that purpose so long before- XII. hand by the wisdom of God. But certainly there can be no doubt as to what is purely prophetical in it, and in determining the times and seasons of both with such wondrous exactness and nicety: For one strict injunction in this solemnity was, that not a bone of the paschal lamb should be broken; which was so remarkably fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ, that notwithstanding the earnest request of the Jews to Pilate; and that the foldiers went with design to execute his order; and that they broke the legs of the two that were crucified at the same time, yet they forbore his; and used another way of making his death sure, contrary to the custom in those cases, by piercing his side with a spear; and so by a particular providence, instead of defeating of one, fulfilled another prophecy, in Zachar. xii. 10. that they *shall look on him whom they have pierced.*

Then the timeing of the paschal sacrifice by a positive command, so as to suit the very month, and day, and hour of offering up this great sacrifice, is yet more wonderful and surprising; insomuch, that he was crucified on the fourteenth day of the first month Nisan; and gave up the Ghost about the ninth hour, that is three of the clock in the afternoon; exactly within the space of the two evenings, in which the paschal lamb was appointed

SERM. appointed to be slain, and eaten. Levit. xxiii.

XII. 5. Nay more, as the lamb was to be separated from the flock four days before, according to the scripture computation of a day for a year, so Christ preached for three years, and in the fourth was sacrificed. And that which shews this circumstance to have been by particular designation to this purpose is, that at his baptism, when he first set upon his ministry at thirty years of age, he was singled out by John the Baptist from the rest of mankind, and expressly proclaimed with this solemn declaration, *behold the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.* And that which makes this yet more remarkable, is what Bochartus observes from John xii. 12. that Jesus came into Jerusalem, in order to his death, on the tenth day of the month Nisan, the very day that the lamb was to be taken up and reserved for the sacrifice; and four days before his crucifixion: All this could be contrived by none but him who foresaw all contingencies, and can dispose all things to work together, to the ends of his infinite wisdom.

I have instanced in these two, as being the most solemn institutions of the ceremonial law; and therefore more remarkably representative of Christ: Not but that all the other parts of it, of less weight and consideration, are wonderfully contrived and calculated for the same purpose, though in a lesser degree,  
and

and not so glaring and apparent: And especially all that great variety of sacrifices and purgations, which could not reasonably be accounted for, but from the relation they had to that one great sacrifice of Christ, and the washing away the guilt of sin by his blood.

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XII.

And therefore now we see plainly, how and in what sense our Saviour says he came to fulfil this part of the law of Moses; namely that he came to perform to a tittle all that was signified and represented by it; to answer the full scope and intention of it in all its circumstances; and to fulfil it to that exactness, that not one jot or tittle of it should have a farther reference to any future revelation that the world was to expect, but to have its full completion in him: And this is with great propriety and elegance called a fulfilling, and not destroying of it; because the letter only of the law is done away; and all the intent and meaning of it, all those divine truths which were couched under it remain eternally: The law was made for the Gospel, and was in truth no other than a preparation for it, and introduction to it: It was our *schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. iii. 24. and then passes away of itself, when there is no farther use of it. The law of carnal commandments is abolished, and that which is spiritual takes place: It is done away, as the fainter light of the moon is by the breaking



SERM. out of the morning beams; which served  
 XII. well enough to dispel thick darkness in the  
 night; but when the sun of righteousness  
 arose it vanished; and we now have that  
 glory by a direct ray, which was derived upon  
 us only by reflection before: And this like-  
 wise was very aptly typified by the vail upon  
 Moses's face, an emblem of the law, which  
 for a time obscured that light from them  
 which the world was not yet able to bear;  
 which *vail is now done away in Christ.* 2 Cor.  
 iii. 14. And now *we all with open face be-  
 hold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; and  
 are changed into the same image, from glory  
 to glory.*

I. Now therefore we may well ask the  
 Jews the same question the Apostle doth,  
 Rom. iii. 31. *Do we then make void the law  
 through faith? God forbid! yea we establish  
 the law.* We place it upon a sure and im-  
 moveable foundation, no less than the wise  
 contrivance of infinite wisdom to great and  
 excellent purposes: And it is they themselves  
 debase it below the reason of a man; it is  
 they abolish and destroy it, by rendering it  
 trifling and insignificant, and altogether un-  
 worthy a lawgiver. For, what a foolish ir-  
 rational institution is their ceremonial law,  
 without being fulfilled and compleated by  
 the Gospel? Nay not to instance in that  
 great variety of sacrifices and purgations, what  
 an empty trifling solemnity would their great  
 anniversary

anniversary sacrifice be, or that other of the paschal lamb, if it were to end only in the bare performance, without any farther prospect or reference to some succeeding dispensations, either towards the Jews or all mankind? Can they imagine that God could be so curious and exact in every little circumstance of those solemnities, so as to direct and establish them by express and positive laws; and yet have no drift or design in it? Will they persuade us that God loves to trifle with mankind at that rate? Or let them shew us what farther intention or reference their law can have; and how all the very circumstances of it can have a more exact completion than what is now assigned them: If not, let them embrace christianity, that they might not dishonour that institution out of zeal, for which they have suffered so much.

As we have seen the law is of itself holy and spiritual, Rom. vii. 12, 14. upon their notion of it it is carnal, it is vain and frivolous; and as our Saviour told them at the first, *they make the word of God of no effect by their traditions*; i. e. they render it without any import or signification to those purposes it was designed by God. It is a strange thing they should be so zealous for every thing that was carnal in the law, and yet so blindly overlook every thing that is spiritual; the only thing that can give it worth or value, and the only glory their law was capable of: And so great a perfec-

SERM. tion and excellence it is, that it is not in man  
 XII. to contrive or imagine any other way to render it so glorious. And therefore I will leave them here to consider how preposterously they acted, when they crucified the Lord of life for that very crime, of which they themselves are so notoriously guilty; and laid to his charge the annulling and corruption of that law, which he came thus literally to fulfil.

2. But Christ's thus fulfilling this part of the law of Moses is not only an unanswerable argument against the Jews, but it is a clear proof and evident demonstration of the truth of the christian faith in general; it is such as cannot be counterfeited, and it is what no impostor ever could pretend to; namely, to have an intire institution of religion framed and calculated, to represent and typify his coming into the world; and that with such nicety and exactness, not only in the main body of it, but in all the little circumstances that attend it.

And now we see the great wisdom of almighty God, in giving those laws and forms of worship only to one particular people, which were however the concernment of the whole world. They were the people among whom Christ was to be born, and therefore it was necessary they should be singled out from the rest of the world; not that they were more worthy, or that God had no regard to the rest of mankind; but that the  
 nature



nature and constitution of these laws might SERM.  
be such an evidence of his divine mission, XII.

when he came into the world, as was not to be counterfeited by the Devil himself. That there might be a particular people, among whom there should be a tabernacle, and temple, and a public service, and a series of prophecies all contrived and preserved to point him out, to prefigure and represent him; and that so plainly, that they should fill the world with expectation of him before he came, which they effectually did. And now we ask what it is that God could have contrived, to have been a more convincing evidence, and clearer demonstration of the divine mission of our Saviour than this? What could have been done more for the conviction of men's minds? An impostor may delude with false miracles, as Simon Magus, and Apollonius did; and he may pretend to prophecies by wresting and distorting them, as Barchochab and Mahomet; but when was there ever an impostor, who pretended that any religion in the world before him, and that too delivered by miracles for several ages, and observed with great superstition and exactness, was calculated with the greatest nicety in all its circumstances, to point him out to the world before-hand, and to be a type and representative of all that he was to perform. The usual style of impostors is, that they come to reveal something altogether new; and they either reject and despise all that ever

SERM. was received before ; or they teach things directly contrary to former revelations, or to the common sentiments of mankind before : Thus making God inconsistent with himself, who is immutable and the same for ever ; and doth not reveal one thing in one age, and another thing contrary to it in another. Which of them all can say as our Saviour doth, that *he came not to destroy, but to fulfil* ; to perform all that ever was prefigured or intended, not only by the religion of the Jews ; but of the whole custom of sacrifices and purgations, which prevailed over the heathen world in all ages till he appeared ; by this means shewing that the course of providence, in his dispensations by mankind, are more unalterable than that of nature ; for that *till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled*, which is expressed thus, in allusion to that tradition of the Jews ; that in the times of the Prophets a sort of learning prevailed, which consisted in the numbering up the very points and letters of the law : And that by a wonderful providence, that the only doubt remaining might be removed ; namely, whether these records, which have so plain a reference to Christ, were so early extant in the world ; and whether they were faithfully handed down to posterity.

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## S E R M O N XIII.

Christ came to fulfil the Law.

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MATTH. v. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

I Have already, from this text, shewn how SERM. XIII.  
our Saviour came to fulfil the ceremonial or ritual part of the law ; and therefore, now I come to consider how he fulfilled the moral part of that law, or the law of nature, which is principally intended in this place.

Now in order to the understanding of this and the three following verses, which are all to one thing ; and that we may conceive rightly what improvement the law of nature hath received from christianity, we must look back as far as verse 23. of the foregoing chapter, where it is said, *Jesus went about preaching the Gospel of the kingdom ;* i. e. the



SERM.

XIII.

doctrines of the kingdom of the Messias, which St. John affirmed to be at hand : The state of the Gospel is called a kingdom, and the preaching of Christ the doctrine of that kingdom, with great aptitude and elegance of speech, for these two reasons : First, because the main intent and design of them is in order to the future happiness of the blessed in another world ; it is all in order to the kingdom of heaven hereafter ; wherein the degrees of glory will be in proportion to the attainments of men's virtue and holiness in this life. There is no respect of persons with God ; all our worldly distinctions of honour and dignity will vanish ; and all the Saints of God, when they go in to possess this kingdom, shall take place as they were sealed in this life : The first may be last, and the last may be first : And as the wicked of all ranks will be cast out into utter darkness, from the presence of the Lord ; so to sit on his right hand, and on his left, will be given to them for whom it was prepared of his father. Secondly, because of that resemblance and analogy there is, between the power of virtue and goodness in the minds of men, the dominion and sway of the spirit of God in their hearts ; and that authority and command which earthly princes have over their bodies. Though this kingdom of Christ be spiritual, and not of this world ; yet it hath in it all the forms of government suitable to its spiritual nature :

It

It hath a heavenly and uncorrupt judge ; it hath a faithful and impartial witness within us ; there will be a solemn day of tryal for our souls, and an irreverfible fentence of abfolution and condemnation pronounced ; and everlafting rewards and punifhment difpenfed, according to the inward difpofition of men's minds, here in this world. For thefe reafons it was, that though our Saviour was to appear in a mean and low condition among men ; though he was to be *defpifed and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; to be cut off out of the land of the living*, and dye under the unfupportable character of a malefactor ; yet he was prophecied of, as of a mighty prince and deliverer ; represented as a king and a prince ; and looked for as fuch in the general opinion and expectation of the world.

Now this kingdom of Chrift, which is not of this world, and yet in the world, leads us into the true nature of that improvement, which morality hath received from the Gofpel: For before, the greateft height and perfection of virtue, confifted in the regulation of men's outward behaviour ; and the chief intent, and main fcope of morality, was to refrain and govern thofe external actions which were vifible to men, and cognizable by them ; fuch as men were proper judges of: And if thefe were no way contrary to the dictates of the law of nature, men acquiefced here, and never proceeded to make any judgment of inward

SERM. ward holiness. What appeared in the actions  
 XIII. of men was esteemed the only object of commendation and reward, of censure and punishment. The most elevated moralists of the heathen valued the secret endowments of the mind no farther than they conduced to a man's present ease and happiness in this world: But as for the rewards of another life, they had not one thought of those being consequent to inward holiness, any farther than it was reduced into practice in the visible part of a man's life. The Jews likewise were of the same religion in this respect; for though the inward temper of the soul was expressed in some instances of their law, and frequently implied; yet whatever the bent of their minds was, if they did but restrain their secret wishes and inclinations from breaking out into open violations of the law, their hearts never condemned them; because there was no punishment for thoughts in their law, therefore they had no sense of the guilt of them. The Jewish Doctors are full and express in this point. Dav. Kim. explains Psalm 66. 16. *If I incline unto wickedness with my heart, the Lord will not hear me, thus, although I should discern iniquity in my heart, nay and were just ready to put it in practice, yet God will not hear it; for God doth never esteem an evil design for the deed.* [See more to this purpose, Grot. on Matth. v. 20.] This was the fundamental error of the Scribes and Pharisees;




Pharisees; and their practice was pursuant SERM.  
to this principle, calculating all the parts of XIII.  
their religion to be seen of men. }

But this was not all, the great defect of morality before Christ did not only consist in this, that it was confined to outward actions, and lost all dominion over the thoughts and intentions of the heart: But in that, even the natural sentiments of men were depraved and corrupted: The principles of the law of nature were defaced and obliterated, and it was not rightly understood, so much as in theory, wherein the true perfection of virtue did consist: The heathen did not direct their worship to the one only true God; and this necessarily had an evil influence upon their whole scheme of morality, and defiled it in every instance: And the Jews, who acknowledged the true God, turned all the principles of morality into superstition and hypocrisy.

And thus we see what necessity there was to paint out to mankind, and describe the greater lines of the law of nature in two tables of stone, by which means that became a positive law, which was in truth natural: And therefore it was that God governed the world, and more particularly the Jews, like an earthly monarch; by external ordinances and ceremonies; and that his laws till Christ were like the laws of men, which proposed temporal rewards and punishments only, as being suited to that external obedience which was required from them. But now the kingdom  
of

SERM. of God, and of his Christ, is transferred  
 XIII. from the outward man to the inward, to the  
 hidden man of the heart. Herein consists  
 the great and glorious change, that from the  
 similitude of a purely temporal government,  
 it is now become purely spiritual. Now the  
 law of God is put where it was at first, in  
 the minds and consciences of men, as Jeremy  
 prophesied with so much solemnity, xxxi. 33.  
*After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my  
 law in their inward parts, and write it in their  
 hearts—and they shall teach no more, every man  
 his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying,  
 know the Lord; for they shall all know me,  
 from the least of them unto the greatest of them,  
 saith the Lord.* His laws and precepts are  
 suited to the nature of this spiritual kingdom,  
 calculated not only barely for the restraining  
 outward actions, but for the inward improve-  
 ment of the mind and conscience, and recti-  
 fying our very inclinations and appetites; that  
 virtue and holiness may become the frame and  
 constitution of our souls; and that all affection  
 and tendency to sin might be rooted out of  
 our nature; that by this means we may be in  
 a good degree restored to our primitive con-  
 stitution, and to that likeness of God im-  
 printed on the soul of man in its first creation.  
 And accordingly, all the performances, or  
 breaches of this law, are cognizable only in  
 another world; they are such as none can  
 make

make any true judgment of but God, who is S E R M.  
the searcher of hearts; and therefore reward- XIII.  
able by none but him, and that in another   
life.

This in general is the great improvement that morality hath received from the Gospel. And now we are to consider the means, by which this great change was wrought in the world: How this inward holiness was introduced; how virtue and goodness was transferred, from the outward deportment to the heart, the fountain of all external behaviour; and by what methods morality was elevated to a pitch so much beyond what mankind was capable of before: Accordingly the means by which this was effected by Christ were these two.

1. By explaining the law of nature in a greater latitude than ever it was received or understood before; and rectifying those mistaken conceptions of it, which had prevailed in the world.

2. By making provision for the performance of it, by human nature, in so exalted and elevated a degree.

I. As to the first, before we come to consider in what instances our Saviour performs this, in his discourse upon the mount, we are to observe, that the moral law is in truth the law of nature, and differs from it only in being transcribed; and so becoming a positive law, which was natural at first: So that pure  
morality



SERM. morality is of eternal indispenfable obligation,  
 XIII. one jot or one tittle of it can in no wife pafs  
 away : It was the fame and constitution of  
 our first parents in their state of innocence;  
 and the observance of it had secured to them  
 eternal life : It was the transgression of this  
 law that made a Saviour necessary ; and it was  
 in itself so holy and indispenfable, that God  
 would not forgive the violation of it, without  
 a satisfaction to his justice : Nay more, it doth  
 not lose its force even among the blest in hea-  
 ven ; the sum and substance of whose duty is  
 the love of God, and of one another, on  
 which two, our Saviour says, hangs all the  
 law and the prophets. This is the law con-  
 cerning which our Saviour declares two things  
 in the words of the text : First, that he came  
 not to destroy it ; not to evacuate or annul  
 one tittle of it ; not to alter any thing of what  
 it was in its original purity : And not only so,  
 but Secondly, that he came to fulfil it ; not to  
 correct any thing erroneous in it, or to supply  
 any deficiencies in that law, so as to render  
 it more compleat or perfect in itself ; but to  
 render it more compleat with respect to us,  
 in whom this light of nature was almost quite  
 extinguished. He came to dispell those clouds  
 which darkened our understandings, that those  
 faint remains and imperfect glimmerings of  
 natural light may be improved into a per-  
 fect day. It is the same law still, which  
 receives no alteration in itself, but is now  
 more perfectly and fully apprehended by  
 that

that light of the Gospel which is now let in SERM.  
upon our souls. XIII.

So that in truth the improvement of morality by the Gospel is not in kind, so much as in degree. Evangelical graces are no other than moral virtues carried on and improved by the enlargement of our minds in a more perfect knowledge of them; for the Gospel doth not inspire us with new faculties: The frame and structure of human nature is the same since Christ that ever it was before. Virtue and goodness still consist in the restraining our appetites, and in the right management of our passions and affections; what the Gospel doth is to direct us to place them upon right objects; and gives us new motives and greater assistance to exercise them more intensely; and then what was moral virtue before, now in a more elevated strain becomes an evangelical grace, and is called by another name. Thus evangelical holiness is morality exalted; and the Gospel is a full and perfect comment upon the moral or natural law, and its thus fulfilling the same law, and carrying it on to a higher pitch by such a clear illustration of it, is a plain argument of its coming from him who is the author of nature.

Thus we see how christianity is a restitution of our nature to its original purity. The law of nature came from God and was in full perfection interwoven with our make; the moral law was a general scheme of the former, and the out-lines of it drawn by the finger of  
God

SERM. God in the Decalogue. The Gospel again is  
 XIII. a full and perfect explanation of this; the two  
 } latter are pursuant to the first, and all of them  
 came from that eternal fountain of truth who  
 is ever consistent with himself and immutable.  
 They are all equally perfect in themselves,  
 though not with respect to us in whom the  
 first was miserably defaced and obliterated:  
 The second was an external view of the first  
 impressions of our nature, in some degree to  
 supply the want and loss of it within ourselves:  
 Lastly, the Gospel is so comprehensive and  
 lively a description of the whole moral law,  
 and filling up of those general heads of duty,  
 that it is plainly a reviving of the law of God  
 within us; putting of it where it was at first,  
*in our inward parts*, that we might perform  
 not only external obedience, but that pure  
 and spiritual worship we were originally made  
 for.

Having thus obviated the mistake men commonly go upon in assigning wherein the improvement of morality by the Gospel consists; namely, by labouring to give instances of virtues which were never in any degree known before: I shall now proceed to those instances of the moral law which our Saviour explains in a greater latitude than ever they were understood before; and wherein he rectifies the mistaken judgments of men concerning the law.

I. The first instance is at the 21st verse,  
*Ye have heard that it hath been said τοῖς ἀρχαίοις,*  
 to



*to them of old time, thou shalt not kill, this is* SERM.  
*the sixth commandment, and whosoever shall* XIII.  
*kill shall be in danger of the judgment, i. e. pur-*  
suant to the law of Moses should be tried for his life; which was ordinarily before the lowest of the three courts of judicature among the Jews; and sometimes in the second: The word *κρίσις* or judgment refers indifferently to either of them, for no case of this nature, but what was extraordinary, was referred to the *συμβούλιον*, the highest court of judicature among them. The whole import and meaning of which is this; namely, that before Christ's coming into the world none but the grosser act of murder was expressly forbid; though all inferior degrees of this sin were implied but not understood, nor fully comprehended till now: For the same law of nature which, in its first purity, forbid the murder of another, forbid likewise all groundless hatred and causeless anger, which might prompt men to the grosser act of this sin. What was thus expressly forbid was cognizable in a human court of judicature, and punished with a temporal punishment; in which he speaks the sense, not only of the Jews, but of the whole heathen world, who had no solemnity either of trial or punishment for any but the overt acts of this sin: And it was impossible it should be otherwise, since there could be no sufficient witnesses of the thoughts and intentions of men's hearts.

SERM.  
XIII.

Thus far is plain and without a difficulty, and naturally leads us into the true meaning of the following verse, which carries at first sight such appearance of difficulty: That which hath rendered it perplexed is for want of considering, 1. That the design of these instances is to shew the improvement of morality by the Gospel. 2. That this improvement in the general, is by transferring outward obedience to the inward improvement of the mind and conscience, and the sanctification of the heart; these two are obvious enough; but the third is less observed, namely, the nature of the style here used by our Saviour; and that his form of speaking of this spiritual kingdom of his, is by way of analogy with that of a temporal kingdom; and here particularly by way of allusion to the courts of judicature among the Jews; naming but two of them, and leaving the third, i. e. the middlemost, unmentioned. Hitherto, says he, it hath been thus, the sin and the punishment have been both outward and temporal; but in my kingdom it is otherwise. Verse 22. *I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* Here are three degrees of guilt, in this instance, in the kingdom of the Messias, which they had nei-  
ther

ther law, nor tryal, nor punishment for; and yet the very least degree of this sin in his kingdom, which was not taken notice of before, renders a man obnoxious to the same punishment with the greatest and foulest act in theirs: So that if a man entertain and nourish causeless anger and malice, even in his heart, against another, he is liable to the judgment, i. e. he may be tried for his soul, and is subject to the condemnation of God. And if this inveteracy and malice conceived in the heart, break out into expressions reflecting upon his person or understanding, (which is the true import of the word racha) these reproachful expressions are an overt act in Christ's spiritual kingdom, upon the same level with crimes of the most grievous nature among the Jews, and which are triable by their highest courts of justice, their sanedrin or court of 72, and punished with their severest punishments. Contemptuous words of a man's parts or his person, is the least outward act of this sin; and yet, in his kingdom, it is answerable to actual murder in their constitution or polity. But if this malice of the heart do exert itself in reviling and falsely charging the religion and consciences of other men, representing them as wicked and infamous to the world, (which is the scripture notion of the word fool, and the blackest character that can be given a man) this shall render a man liable to a punishment greater

S E R M.  
XIII.



SERM. than ever was yet expressly assigned to actual  
 XIII. murder, even to hell fire, i. e. to a punishment peculiar to crimes committed against the laws of this spiritual kingdom. This branding any person with a mark of infamy and wickedness, is the murdering his reputation, which is more valuable and dearer to him than life; and therefore in the judgment of God it will be condemned and punished with everlasting burnings.

Thus the whole sense of the four following verses falls in easily, which are a prosecution of the same allusion or analogy, and spoke in the style of an earthly kingdom. So great an offence is this causeless anger in Christ's spiritual kingdom, that though it vent itself only in words, and never proceed to any immediate violence against the life of another; yet it shall render a man obnoxious to the greatest punishment in that kingdom, even hell fire; and therefore, though your sacrifice were at the altar, you must leave it there unoffered. Both Jews and heathen had a formidable notion of any delay or interruption in the performing of the sacrifice, when once it was presented at the altar; it was looked upon as a very unhappy omen, an affront to the Deity, and a discredit to themselves: However there it must lye, as being an abomination, till reparation is made for all unjust resentment conceived against our brother; and if this be not done, the process will be issued out

out against thee as regularly and surely as it S E R M.  
is in human courts of judicature; the plain- XIII.  
tiff will appear against thee; the judge will  
sentence thee, and deliver thee over to the  
jailor; and you will be clapt into such a pri-  
son from whence you can never be released;  
since you have omitted the only opportunity  
of discharging your debt; which was the  
making some amends and reparation for the  
injury you have done your adversary, while  
you are in the way with him, i. e. while you  
are both together in this world.

Thus we see how far the Gospel hath ex-  
alted morality, in this first instance, beyond  
what was ever imagined before. The sum of  
what is said in short is this: By the laws both  
of God and Man, Jews and Heathen, nothing  
was expressly defined and adjudged to be  
murder, but the wilful and actual killing of  
another; nor was there any punishment  
threatened to the inferior degrees of this  
sin: But now the first motions of anger in  
the heart, though they never proceed to any  
outward expressions, render a man guilty be-  
fore this spiritual tribunal: The very inward  
disposition and tendency of the soul, so as  
even to wish or desire the hurt of another, in  
his person or reputation, is triable and punish-  
able in this spiritual kingdom. I shall only  
observe farther, what caution there is observed  
here, in the manner of expressing this whole  
matter, by saying only, that he shall be *in*  
*danger of the judgment; in danger of the coun-*

SERM. *cil; in danger of hell fire; and not by any*  
 XIII. determinate and positive decision, which was  
 to shew there was room for repentance under  
 the Gospel, which was not allowed to the  
 transgressions of the law, for which men were  
 to suffer without mercy when it appeared  
 they were guilty; it is not so with these in-  
 ward transgressions of the Gospel: Indeed  
 while these inward irregularities and indispo-  
 sitions of the soul remain, men are in a state  
 of death, and in danger of eternal condem-  
 nation; which without repentance will as  
 surely be executed upon them, as actual  
 murder was punished with death under the  
 law.

2. The second instance our Saviour gives  
 is, at the 27th verse; *Ye have heard that it*  
*was said by them of old time, thou shalt not*  
*commit adultery; which is the seventh com-*  
*mandment, and this sin was by the law pu-*  
*nished with death: But I say unto you, that*  
*whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her,*  
*hath committed adultery with her already in his*  
*heart.* The law that made adultery death is  
 now abolished; and instead thereof, by the  
 laws of my kingdom, the intention and pur-  
 pose of the heart is adultery; and will be ad-  
 judged, and condemned, and punished as such:  
 The sin of adultery is forbid in both; but the  
 grosser act only is esteemed so by the laws of  
 God and man hitherto; for the desire of ano-  
 ther man's wife was never called adultery be-  
 fore Christ, though even this was forbid:  
 But



But now the very coveting our neighbour's wife is defined to be adultery; this sin is committed when it hath got the consent of our wills, though there be neither power nor opportunity to proceed farther: Nay more, though we have no temptation in a single instance, yet if in the general our lusts are not so far mortified and habitually restrained, that we have such a power over ourselves, as to overcome any such particular temptation when it offers, we incur the guilt of this sin; that very evil disposition of the body and mind, which leaves a man in a condition to be overcome by any temptation that may offer, renders a man as guilty in the sight of God, as if it made any outward discoveries of itself. For it is the temper and disposition of the heart and conscience, that renders a man obnoxious to punishment, or qualifies him for reward in this kingdom: And as the outward act of this sin was punished with temporal death; so this inward disposition of the mind will be punished with death eternal: Wherefore our Saviour advises to use the same caution and forecast in this instance, that is common and ordinary in the world; if any part of the body be rotten and gangered, we endure the pain and horror of cutting it off, rather than endanger the whole body. Just thus are we to deal with a lust; though the restraining and mortifying of it be like cutting off our limbs, full of uneasiness and

SERM. anguish, yet it is absolutely necessary, and it  
 XIII. must be done: For otherwise, everlasting  
 death is as sure and infallible a consequence,  
 by the constitution of this kingdom which is  
 spiritual; as temporal death in that instance  
 from the laws of nature; *wherefore it is pro-  
 fitable for thee, that one of thy members should  
 perish, and not that thy whole body should be  
 cast into hell.*

Thus it is in all the other instances; at  
 the 33d verse, the whole religion of an oath,  
 which, before, both among Jews and Heathen,  
 consisted in the keeping and actual perform-  
 ance of what was sworn, is now transferred  
 to the inward regard we are to have to truth  
 and veneration for the holy name of God:  
 We are to be endowed with such habitual ve-  
 raciousness of mind, that our words shall be be-  
 lieved as readily as if we conversed by intu-  
 ition; and that men could see the thoughts  
 of our hearts: Inasmuch that, in this spiritual  
 kingdom of Christ, the proper use of an oath  
 should not be so much to create any certainty  
 of belief in others, as a solemn acknowledg-  
 ment of the providence of God; and therefore  
 never to be used but upon solemn extraordi-  
 nary occasions.

Again at the 38th verse. If the injured per-  
 son under the law insisted upon it, he might  
 demand *an eye for an eye; or a tooth for a  
 tooth*; which *lex talionis*, though it have a  
 great appearance of justice and equity, and  
 seem

seem in itself agreeable to the strictest rules SERM.  
of both; yet it argues an impotent passion XIII.  
and a mean revengeful spirit, to require that  
mischief from another, from whence we our-  
selves shall reap no benefit: And therefore,  
now the inward regulation and perfection of  
the mind is intended, this law is become of  
no use to us; and we are forbid to insist  
upon it: No mischief or hurt, that is suffe ed  
in the person of another, can contribute any  
way to the real benefit and improvement of  
our mind: Wherefore, by the laws of this  
kingdom, you can compel no one to restitu-  
tion or reparation of an injury; though all be  
bound to it, yet none can be forced: We are  
to suffer any injury or reproach, rather than  
repel it to the greater prejudice of the injurious  
person. As the injuries that are done to us  
are transgressions of the laws of this spiritual  
kingdom, they are not to have their punish-  
ment in this world; nor at the hands of men:  
In this sense we now learn, that vengeance be-  
longs to God: And therefore, while we are  
here in the midst of all the wrongs and inju-  
ries we suffer, we are to possess our souls  
in patience, with a perfect resignation of all  
punishment into the hands of God, to be in-  
flicted in another world.

At the 43d verse. *It hath been said thou shalt  
love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*; this  
our Saviour represents as the sense of both the  
Pharisees and Heathen. All men ever had  
some



SERM. some notion of that regard that was due to  
 XIII. those who were linked to them in the same  
 { common tie of human nature ; but then no  
 opinion was more current, among all mankind than that, by becoming our enemies, men had forfeited all pretence or claim to any degree of kindness and affection from us : So that the highest strains of this virtue carried men no farther than the keeping faith with enemies ; and treating them generously when ever we got them in our power : But for any degree of affection due to them while they continued such, they had not the least thoughts of it. This is what our Saviour adds, teaching us that no malice or inveteracy towards us whatsoever cuts off the title they have to kindness and affection from us. At verse 44. *But I say unto you, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you :* A strange and elevated degree of this virtue ! for we are not only to return them good for evil ; but we must be ready to do it in those very instances, wherein we have suffered from them : So that this point of morality hath been carried on and improved in these two respects. First, whereas the exercise of this virtue of humanity and kindness was confined to our own nation, or country, or friends, the mind is now enlarged by the Gospel, to take in all mankind ; there is a spacious field of virtue opened ; the whole world is to be the object of our love and affection.

fection. By the laws of this kingdom, there S E R M.  
is to be no such thing as an enemy; and the XIII.  
same natural affection to all our fellow crea-  
tures is to be revived in us, with which we  
were first made; and which would have con-  
tinued if we had remained in innocency.  
Secondly, that kindness which was before ex-  
pressed only by outward deportment, and  
was never esteemed any way defective, if it  
failed not in that; is now to become the ha-  
bitual tendency and inclination of our minds;  
so as that we shall desire and wish their good,  
and pray to God for that good towards them  
which is not in our power to effect: The  
reason given for this here is, because we are  
to follow the example of God, *who makes his*  
*sun to rise on the evil and the good*, i. e. who  
treats them all alike in this world; because  
this is not the time for the rewards or the pu-  
nishments of his kingdom to take place.

Chap. vi. verse 1. Acts of generosity and re-  
lieving the necessities of others were ever in  
great esteem with Jews and Heathen; and  
this esteem and reputation it gained in the  
world, was the only motive with both to the  
performance of it: But now we are taught  
wherein the real worth and excellency of such  
actions consists; and that they are no farther  
valuable than they are done out of a regard  
to the will of God, and good of our neigh-  
bour: The real intrinsic worth of them is in  
that principle of the heart from whence they  
flow; and the having an eye to the secret and  
unseen

SERM. unseen reward of this spiritual kingdom, which  
XIII. is not of this world.

And thus it is in the following instances ;  
of prayer, which from an external and pompous worship only, is transferred to the habitual piety and devotion of the soul, a thing entirely new till then. And in that other of fasting, which before was nothing more than for an outward shew and appearance of religion, is now of no farther use or value than it conduces to the rectifying our passions, restraining our appetites, and promoting those hidden virtues of the soul, which will approve us to God who is the searcher of hearts.

S E R M O N



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## S E R M O N XIV.

Christ came to fulfil the Law.

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MATTH. V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

I N my last discourse upon this subject, when I had observed how this saying of our Saviour's was more immediately and principally spoke of the moral law, I quoted the 23d verse of the foregoing chapter, wherein it is said; that *Jesus went about preaching the doctrine of the kingdom*; as being necessary to lead us into a right understanding of the whole style of this sermon upon the mount; and consequently into right apprehensions of that improvement, which morality, or the law of nature, hath received from christianity; which I observed in the main did consist in transferring that outward obedience, which was

S E R M.  
XIV.

the

SERM. the only subject of all laws both of God and  
 XIV. man before, to the inward sanctification of  
 { the mind and conscience, so that the kingdom of God in the world, which before was an external dispensation only, is now set up in men's hearts, i. e. where it was at first; before the corruption of our natures. After this I proceeded to consider by what means this mighty change was effected by our Saviour. And this was

1. By his explaining the law of nature in a greater latitude than ever it was received or understood before.

2. By making provision for the performance of it by human nature in so exalted and elevated a degree.

By this method he applied himself both to the understandings and wills of men, which were the two great faculties weakened and corrupted; and which his business was to rectify and improve. As to the first, I have already passed through several of those instances of moral duties which our Saviour gives in this discourse of his upon the mount, wherein he gives no precepts of virtue intirely new, but rectifies the mistaken judgments of men, transfers them from an outward deportment to the clearing of that inward fountain from whence they flow. For to proceed where I left off, at the 6th chap. and 19th ver. where our Saviour begins to speak against covetousness, and inordinate love of the things of this world. 'Tis true this was esteemed a vice among the heathen,

heathen, and they had very exact notions of the excellence of generosity and beneficence. SERM. XIV.

But then they had no notion of the guilt of having their minds too fixt and intent upon the pursuit of the riches, and of the grandeur and preferments of this world; and what an universal influence that temper would have upon the whole morality of their lives. If they did this with honesty, and used no methods of deceit and falshood; nor attained them by any methods of oppression, by fraud, or circumvention, then the more intent and earnest they were in the prosecution of worldly riches and grandeur, they looked upon it to be so much the more commendable, and those who despised them did it only because there was not that present satisfaction in them that they seemed to bring, and therefore preferred their ease and quiet beyond them; and valued themselves for being disengaged from so great an incumbrance. These were the extremes they ran into; but our Saviour teaches us the middle way, neither to be too intent upon the good things of this life, nor to despise them; though they may be obtained without indirect means, yet even upon this supposition, the having our hearts set upon them is the sin of covetousness, and the having our minds too eager in the pursuit of riches, or too great a complacence in them and dependance upon them when we have them, is utterly inconsistent with the laws of this spiritual kingdom; we are first to *seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto*



SERM. *unto us.* Accordingly our Saviour's precept here  
 XIV. all at once takes the mind off from the things of  
 this world; from all those things after which he  
 observes *the Gentiles seek*, and lifts it up to  
 heaven where their minds never came. *Lay*  
*not up for your selves treasures upon earth—*  
*But lay up for your selves treasures in heaven,*  
*where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt*; which  
 is a familiar way of speaking of another world,  
 as of our home and our eternal abode; and a  
 style as new and exalted as that degree of vir-  
 tue it recommends, and altogether unknown  
 till used by our Saviour. This love of the  
 world, which before was esteemed in proporti-  
 on to men's success, so it was accompanied  
 with no dishonesty, is in it self now condemn-  
 ed as utterly inconsistent with a christian  
 spirit, *for where your treasure is, there will*  
*your heart be also.* Men's hearts and affections  
 were never till now taken off from the things of  
 this world, the objects of our sense and under-  
 standing, and placed intirely upon those things  
 of another world which we can neither see  
 nor understand. So that the main current of  
 our thoughts and bent of our wills and affec-  
 tions must be all that way, insomuch that  
 we shall pursue the attainment of virtue and  
 holiness with the same eagerness and resoluti-  
 on and incessant endeavours with which men  
 pursue the good things of this world. This  
 is to be the chief business and imployment of  
 our lives; and the things of this world we are  
 to leave to God. The kingdom of God and  
 his

his righteousness is to be our main scope and aim; SERM. XIV.  
and we are to desire the things of this world to be added to us only in such proportions as God shall see fit by giving a blessing upon our honest industry, with a perfect resignation of all our worldly concerns to the care of providence; of which our Saviour discourses in a strain of eloquence beyond what was ever thought or spoke before. 'Tis true the more refined Heathen had a pretty good notion of the providence of God being concerned in human affairs; but then it was in those that were most important and concerning; and they all imagined it below the dignity of the Deity to interpose in the minute and trifling concerns of life, as they esteemed them. All these they thought sufficiently provided for by the ordinary course of nature, and a general providence. But now we learn that nothing relating to us is below the particular care and notice of the Divinity; every bit we eat is from him; and there is not a hair of our heads can fall to the ground without him; and I think it is impossible to instance in any thing of less moment to us, so that even those things are the immediate object of his concern for us, which are too small to fall within our own observation.

Now this clear and full revelation of the providence of God concerning it self in the minutest affairs of human life, as it removes all those doubts and perplexing difficulties relating to it in which the Heathen world was involved; so it hath an universal influence

SERM. upon our whole lives ; and tends directly to  
 XIV. the advancement of all virtues to a higher de-  
 { gree than human nature was capable of with-  
 out this discovery. It must make our faith  
 and dependance upon him more firm and un-  
 shaken ; it must render our love of God more  
 intense and warm ; it must give us a quicker  
 sense of gratitude, such as will put us upon  
 the practice of all those things that are pleasing  
 to him : And the knowledge of his prying so  
 narrowly into all our thoughts, and being such  
 a curious observer of all things relating to us,  
 must have a mighty power to restrain all our  
 vicious inclinations more effectually. Such a  
 distinct knowledge of the providence of God  
 is a foundation for the improvement of all vir-  
 tue and goodness, and elevating of it to a pitch  
 beyond the meer light of nature.

By these instances we see how Christ did  
 not come to annul one tittle of the law of na-  
 ture, but to carry on and improve the moral  
 law, which was only some out-lines and a ge-  
 neral Scheme of it ; to express and describe  
 plainly all that was obscurely hinted at, or  
 by any implication or consequence compre-  
 hended in it, by which means the Gospel is  
 now become a law as perfect and comprehen-  
 sive as the law of nature was at first in its  
 purity ; and indeed the same, which from the  
 first extinguishing of that natural light, cleared  
 up in every age by the same degrees that the  
 Messias or promised seed opened to the world.  
 It is all one intire eternal law of God, and  
 differs from it self only in degrees of revela-  
 tion,



tion: Each of them are equally perfect and every one a part of the whole, and all men will be judged at the last day in proportion to the view and prospect they have had of it in every age from the beginning of the world.

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The great improvement of the moral law by christianity, is not by a discovery or enjoining of virtues wholly new, and altogether unknown to the world; nor by making any part of moral goodness a point of necessary duty, which in its own nature was not so before, but by enlarging the understandings of men in the knowledge of those virtues and graces which were the original stamp of their nature; and by transferring the main substance of religion from external performances, to the inward rectitude and sanctification of the mind and conscience, insomuch that whereas outward actions were the only rule and adequate measure of all moral goodness; instead thereof it is now to be valued in proportion to the inward disposition of the soul, though we have no opportunities of giving external demonstration of it: A degree of virtue and goodness which none but God can see, and none but he can reward.

Till the Gospel was preached mankind at best had but narrow and limited conceptions even of those duties which were knowable by the light of nature, and it was the want of clear apprehensions wherein the real excellence and perfection of virtue consisted, which made both Jews and Heathen run all religion into superstition, and place it in so many rites and

SERM. circumstantial observances of things not only  
 XIV. indifferent, but wicked; and many of them  
 directly opposite to the dictates of natural conscience.

Something of every grace and virtue was known both to Jews and Heathen, but in lesser and more imperfect degrees; and what we gain by the Gospel with respect to our understanding, is a more full and clear perception of them: We are better informed in the truth and certainty of their nature; and have stronger evidence, and a fuller assurance and conviction in our minds, of the resemblance all virtue and goodness bears to the perfections of the divine nature; insomuch that we have as little doubt and hesitation concerning them, as if they were written in our hearts, where they really were at first, and by means of the Gospel are in a manner grafted there again.

Having thus considered the first means, by which the kingdom of God was transferred from an outward and temporal dispensation only, to the mind and conscience, and set up in men's hearts by Jesus Christ; I now come to the consideration of the second means by which this was effected.

2. By making provision for the performance of this eternal law of God by human nature, in a more exalted and elevated degree. And this is done by our Saviour several ways.

1. By taking away all those temporal rewards and punishments, proposed by the law of God or man, adapted only to that external

nal obedience required; and substituting spiritual functions instead of them, suitable to the spiritual nature of the laws of this kingdom of the Messias: Which respects the hearts and consciences of men alone; and takes cognizance of outward actions only as they are the result and consequence of the inward disposition of men's souls. SERM. XIV.

Thus we see, all at once, what a turn there is given to the whole dispensation of providence towards mankind; and how the kingdom of God among men, from being visible, and bearing the form of a temporal government, is changed into a kingdom purely spiritual. For whereas the outward breaches of the moral law were punished with death; now by the laws of this spiritual kingdom of the Messias, the punishment of the outward transgressions of the law of God is left entirely to the laws of men; and both the outward and inward transgressions of it are reserved for punishment in another world: Inasmuch that by the laws of this kingdom, no temporal punishment can be inflicted in any degree for the highest aggravation of guilt. And whereas, before Christ's coming into the world, no punishment was expressly threatened by God for the thoughts of men's hearts, or the dispositions of their souls; now they are the great object either of reward or punishment: Which as it in short gives us a good notion of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom,

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kingdom, so it shews us the great propriety of the word kingdom; and with what wisdom it is adapted to express the state of the Gospel, and that great revolution, wrought by the appearance of our Saviour in the world. Not but that both Jews and Heathen had a notion of future rewards and punishments in a good degree from the light of nature and dictates of reason, though not from any express law of God; and therefore we are not to suppose that the Gospel made a revelation of future rewards and punishments intirely new: Wherefore in this, as in the several following instances, I am to consider, not what the Gospel hath revealed, that never was known in any degree before; but, which is more for the truth and excellence of it, how far it hath carried on what knowledge men had of them before; and how far it hath by that means conduced to the great improvement of all virtue and goodness, and the exaltation of it to such degrees of perfection as were not practicable without this revelation.

1st. As to the rewards of another life, the soul of man hath a consciousness of its own immortality; and though many both of Jews and Heathen denyed it, yet after all their argument and sophistry the thought was apt to return upon them again: And the natural result of that opinion was, that if the soul existed after death, it must necessarily be in happiness or misery; and that these would be the consequences

consequences of the practice of virtue and goodness in this life; or on the contrary of vice and wickedness; insomuch that the reward of virtue and goodness, in another world, was a well known opinion before our Saviour's coming; and yet, by the great improvement of this doctrine, Christ is very truly said to have *brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel*, having in many respects carried it on beyond the utmost reach of a meer human understanding; which is the immediate import of the word φωτίσαντος in the original, i. e. he gave the world much greater light into that doctrine, of which they had but confused and uncertain apprehensions before, he added a new lustre and illumination to it.

For first, there never was any express revelation from God, or promise made to mankind of future rewards in another life, before Christ: Men had nothing more than the surmises of their own breasts, and what they could gather from the deductions of their own reason, by consequences drawn from what they observed of the nature of virtue, and of the unequal distributions of providence in this life. Cicero himself calls it *futurorum quoddam augurium seculorum*; a meer guess or conjecture only of a life to come: But they could never arrive to any certainty or fixt dependance for their hopes: The Heathen had no promise of a reward for virtue, either in this world or the next: The Jews had no

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promise but of temporal rewards; and this was the reason why, though the expectations of another world being natural could never be totally extinguished, yet that they were perplexed with so many doubts and uncertainties about it. This faint and glimmering twilight of nature grew into a perfect day by the rising of the sun of righteousness; so that now the covenant between God and man is *established*, and that likewise *upon better promises*: It is called a covenant in great condescension, to shew how God hath declar'd himself bound to make his promise good to us; and to shew us how he is under an indispensable obligation so to do: And St. John tells us, *this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. I appoint unto you a kingdom*, says our Saviour, *as my father hath appointed unto me*; and his kingdom he tells us is not of this world. *The man that endures temptation in this world*, says St. James, *cap. i. 12. He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*; which we are told is an *incorruptible* one, and *will never fade away*; which clear revelation of a future reward made St. Paul, upon a prospect of his past life and his approaching death, say with great assurance, 2 Tim. iv. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them*



*them that love his appearing* : Which expression was built upon those words of our Saviour, which he said would be pronounced at the last day ; *come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* S E R M. XIV.

And now where is there any thing relating to the reward of virtue in another life like this extant in the world before our Saviour ? Where was there any thing so full, and clear, and positive ? Nay where was there extant the least promise from God of any reward whatever hereafter ? If all this knowledge could have been natural, there had been no need of this revelation. The wisdom of God gave the world sufficient time to try the utmost stretch of human reason, which in the glorious and peaceful empire of Augustus was at its crisis ; and time hath shewn, that human understanding was not capable of greater refinements than what it arrived to in his days : And yet the most elevated notions of men, with relation to the rewards of another world, if compared with these, are profound ignorance and stupidity. It is confessed the suggestions of nature went a great way towards the forwarding of the practice of virtue from this motive ; but it was not without elaborate reasoning and deductions ; and it required great application and resolution to keep up any tolerable sense of future rewards in the minds of men : But now it is plain and obvious to every one that there are eternal rewards ;

SERM. wards: What appeared but probable before,  
 XIV. is now sure and certain; we have a positive  
 { promise from the mouth of one who hath  
 given evidence of his divine mission sufficient  
 to leave every reasonable man without excuse  
 if he do not yield and embrace the revelation:  
 Wherefore, notwithstanding all that ever  
 was known of the rewards of another life, by  
 Jews or Heathen, Christ is very truly said to  
*become in us the hope of glory*; and we are very  
 properly said to be *begotten again unto a lively*  
*hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from*  
*the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and*  
*undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved*  
*in heaven for us.* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

And now will any one ask how this determining of mankind in a point of the most universal concern, and highest importance to them, contributes to the improvement of morality? Was it possible for men to have gone as far in the practice of virtue and goodness, upon those weak suggestions and faint surmises of future rewards, as upon a plain and express promise from heaven, revealed under the notion of a covenant which binds God to the performance; and therefore founds our expectations upon the truth and veracity of him who cannot lye? Christ was the first that ever spoke openly and fully, without any hesitation or reserve; and gave us the word of God for it. Nothing blunts the edge of all endeavours like any doubt or uncertainty in the object of them: When there is a possibility

lity of a disappointment in the end, it discourages us in every step of our way; it breaks the force of all our resolutions, and enfeebles all our powers. The question before Christ was, whether men should part with a certain pleasure at present, for an uncertain reward hereafter? And where there is a doubt, our own experience shews us how apt the propensions of nature are to turn the scale on the wrong side.

This was the case of the generality of the Heathen and Jewish world, who looked no farther than the things of this life, and made them the sole and ultimate scope of all their actions; excepting only some few extraordinary tempers, who preferred even that uncertainty before the short satisfactions of this present life. But now the question is, whether we shall foregoe the lusts and unlawful pleasures of this transitory world, which *passes away and the fashion thereof*, for a sure and certain expectation of *an eternal weight of glory*. The exceeding great and precious promises made us in the Gospel, and the clear revelation of a future reward have a direct tendency to take the mind off from all the things of this world, and fix our eyes upon that recompence of reward: It lifts us up from earth to heaven; it abstracts our thoughts, and breeds a contempt of all things here below: And most certainly, *where our treasure is there will our hearts be also*, i. e. thither we shall bend the whole strength of all



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all our faculties ; our longings will be that way, and we shall pursue it with all the strength and vigour of soul and body : What a mighty improvement must this be to all morality ? Men had a knowledge of future rewards before ; Christ hath not only added a promise, but given us a clear view and prospect of them. How must this certainly animate our endeavours after the attainment of all virtue and goodness ? It collects all the powers of the mind ; it makes us persevere with chearfulness and alacrity, and lay ourselves out in the work ; it supports us under all the difficulties and uneasiness we meet with, *knowing that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen :* In which single instance there is a more clear and full discovery of a future reward than the whole world was able to produce, in all the ages which preceded the coming of Christ. And we may challenge any enemy to revealed religion, to instance in any one particular of virtue and goodness purely moral, that is not improved and exalted by it.

2. Christ is very properly said to have brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, because he hath more clearly revealed to us the future rewards of the body as well as the soul. The resurrection of the  
body

body was so far from being altogether un-  
known, that it was an early doctrine in the  
world among the Heathen. Diogenes Laer-  
tius observes (in his proœmium, page 6.) that  
it was an opinion among the Persian Magi,  
that men were ἀναβιώσασθαι ἢ ἔσσεσθαι ἀθανάτους, to rise  
again and live for ever. And accordingly there  
are many instances in Heathen authors of  
persons, who were dead, coming to life again,  
(see a collection of them in Pfannerus's Syl.  
T. Gent. pa. 431) which shewed they  
thought it not impossible. *Mors*, says Seneca  
—*intermittit vitam, non eripit.* (Epistle 36)  
And Minutius Felix observes, that Pythagoras  
and Plato were of this opinion, and taught  
it; but that they delivered it *corruptâ et di-  
midiatâ fide*; alluding to their doctrine of  
the παλιγγενεσία and the μετεμψύχωσις; which doc-  
trines shewed plainly they were of opinion,  
that the soul would not remain always in a  
state of separation. In those opinions the doc-  
trine of the resurrection of the body was in-  
volved, though with a mixture of error and  
obscurity: And we find it was a doctrine held  
by the Pharisees in the time of St. Paul, Acts  
xxiii. 6. when he divided the multitude by  
crying out, *of the hope and resurrection of the  
dead I am called in question.*

Thus far the light of nature proceeded in  
the knowledge of the resurrection of the body;  
the natural result of which was, that if the  
bodies of men were to be raised, it must be  
either to a state of happiness or misery. The

Gospel

SERM.  
XIV.

SERM. Gospel hath enlarged the mind in the know-  
 XIV. ledge of this great and important truth, and  
 { given a more exact and particular account of  
 it: Whereas men were involved in many  
 scruples and intricacies relating to this mat er,  
 and that it was disbelieved by the generality;  
 infomuch that none but some few considering  
 people gave any hearty assent to it; now *God*  
*bath given assurance of it unto all men, in*  
*that he bath rais d up Christ from the dead.*  
 Those instances of men raised from the dead  
 in heathen tradition, though we should sup-  
 pose some of them real and effected by God,  
 with design to keep up some belief of the re-  
 surrection in the world, which is not unlikely;  
 yet they were not so attested as our Saviour's  
 was, and delivered down with such invincible  
 proof of the truth and reality of them, to be  
 a demonstration to all future generations, that  
 God will raise the dead.

Moreover, whereas it was believed by ma-  
 ny that the souls would go into other bodies,  
 we are now expressly informed that 'tis this  
 same body we have in this life shall rise again:  
*As these mortal bodies are quickned in this life*  
*by the spirit of God that dwells in us, so 'tis*  
*this very corruptible that shall put on incor-*  
*ruption, and this mortal that shall put on im-*  
*mortality; and then shall death be swallowed*  
*up in victory;* nay more, we are farther in-  
 formed in what mankind had not the least  
 notion of before, namely, that our bodies shall  
 not



not only rise again, but that they shall receive SERM.  
a glorious change beyond any thing we can XIV.  
think or imagine. *The dead shall be raised* }  
*incorruptible, and we shall be changed,* 1 Cor.  
xv. 51. *It is sown in corruption, it is raised*  
*in incorruption; it is sown in disho-*  
*nour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in*  
*weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a*  
*natural body, it is raised a spiritual bo-*  
*dy.* Where was there extant in the world  
such a positive account of this great change,  
or such a full and lively description of it?  
Where was there any thing like these words of  
St. Paul, Philip. iii. 20, 21. *For our conver-*  
*sation is in Heaven, from whence also we look*  
*for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who*  
*shall change our vile body, that it may be jashi-*  
*oned like unto his glorious body; according to the*  
*working whereby he is able even to subdue all*  
*things unto himself.* Nay farther yet, we are  
now told that all men will not die, though  
all will be changed; *behold I shew you a my-*  
*stery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be*  
*changed;* and that this will be effected in a  
moment, in the twinkling of an eye. What an  
idea this raises in us of omnipotence? How  
easy it describes the raising of the dead,  
which the whole world before made such a  
difficulty of? The bodies of men shall not on-  
ly be raised; but in an instant. Those few  
words give us a more comprehensive notion  
of the mighty power of God, than all the  
Heathen and Jewish theology. And lastly,  
to

SERM. to be more particular yet, we are informed  
 XIV. that this general resurrection shall be performed at twice, and the former shall be of good people; *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first, 1 Theff. iii. 16.* and again it is said, Revel. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.*

Now in proportion to the improvement of our knowledge in this great point it must of necessity have greater power to improve our virtues, by swaying our affections; raising of our hopes; adding life and vigour to all our endeavours in the pursuit of virtue and holiness. It being so clearly revealed to us, that the body will be partaker of the same eternal reward with the soul, can't but render us more diligent and resolute in restraining and governing all the appetites of the body; it must make us more exactly sober, and chaste, and temperate; it must put us upon cleansing all the *filthiness of the flesh*, and labouring to *present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.* And this use is made of this doctrine by the Apostle, Coloss. iii. 4, 5. *When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory; mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, &c. i. e.* Now that you have a clearer prospect of this future reward let this prevail with

with you to the performance of all this more effectually, with greater constancy and perseverance, that you may practise all those virtues in a higher strain than what the glimmering and uncertain hopes of Jews or Heathen were able to prompt them to; having our mind fixt upon the recompence we are to meet with at the resurrection of the just. Titus ii. 11, 12, 13. *For the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Search all the divinity and religion of the antients, and shew any thing like this; and then let those persons be easy in their minds who disbelieve the Gospel; and preposterously set up morality in opposition to that revelation, which is in truth no other than the perfection and consummation of it.

3. But lastly, our Saviour is truly said to have *brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel*, and by that means to have exalted all moral goodness to a great height, because he hath discovered to us that the rewards of heaven are altogether spiritual, and in no degree to be conceived or apprehended by us in this life. This is an improvement, a revelation entirely new. All the rewards of a future state thought of by the Heathen had some mixture of sensual pleasures; they could not



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carry their minds beyond these ; nay though they generally believed nothing survived but the soul, yet they preposterously imagined it conversant with objects only of the senses and appetites of the body : The most elevated conceptions they had of the joys of another world, was that those sensual pleasures were refined in degree, and exalted into a higher gust and relish ; but did not dream of their being of quite another kind. And that the Jews were of the same opinion is evident from that question of the Sadduces to our Saviour, *In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven ?* For if there was any resurrection at all they imagined sensual pleasure to be a necessary consequence of it. But our Saviour answers them that in the resurrection men shall be like the Angels of God in Heaven, rendered capable of pure and spiritual delights ; altogether beyond the reach of human imagination : We are now taught, Rev. vii. 16. that those who are before the throne of God *shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more* ; all these bodily appetites which serve only to supply the defects and necessities of present nature will cease ; the joys of another life will be all pure and intellectual, and will consist in the beatifick vision. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*, who we are told *dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see* with these bodily eyes that are dazled even with the light of the sun. 'Tis expressly said that *it doth not appear what we shall be*, and that *our life is hid with Christ*

*Christ in God.* How does this elevate the soul of any man who believes it, beyond all that ever was known before? And for those who will not believe it, all that can be said is, that the mighty force and power of this motive to goodness is lost in them; and it is impossible for them to attain those degrees of virtue and holyness as if they did believe it: They cannot have that contempt for this world and all things in it; nor can they fix their thoughts so inflexibly upon heaven and immortality, as to be able to forego the gratification of all their fleshly appetites; or at least not with that obstinate resolution and constancy; and consequently cannot arrive to any good perfection of moral goodness. And this brings me to the second thing, by which our Saviour rendered morality practicable by human nature in a more exalted and elevated degree; namely,

2. By a clearer revelation of a future judgment, and the punishments of another world: Whereas before our Saviour's coming, no punishment was expressly threatned to any inward sinfulness or corruption of the soul; so on the contrary, in the kingdom of the Messiah this is the main object of punishment: All temporal punishments are taken away, and none but those of another world are threatned, either against wicked thoughts or external actions: The tares and the wheat are to grow together till the harvest, and then it is that the tares and the chaff shall be burnt with unquenchable fire. This is a clear and

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fatisfactory solution for the unequal distribution of providence in this life, which so much puzzled the heathen world before, for want of such a clear and positive revelation of future judgment and misery as we have.

It must be confessed that the Heathen, upon the strength of reason, and presages of natural conscience, went a great way in the knowledge of a future judgment, and punishment of sin hereafter. Socrates in Plato, under the feigned name of Rhadamanthus, describes the judgment of a soul polluted with lewdness and intemperance; and when condemned by the judge it is committed to a prison, *οι μέλλει ἐλθῶσα ἀνατλήναι τὰ προσήκοντα πάθη*, where it must undergo the punishment it deserved. (Plato in Gorg. d. c. P. Fa. p. 447.) and in another place says Plato, *θάνατος οὐκ ἔστιν ἔσχατον*. Death is not the last thing, for the punishment of the wicked is beyond it (Plato de L. L. lib. 10. p. 172. P. Fa. p. 464.) And Virgil describing the strictness of this judgment, says that all sins are punished,

*Quæquis apud superos, furto lætatus inani,  
Disulit in seram commissæ piacula mortem.*

The heathen writers are full of remarks to this purpose; and have accordingly invented several punishments, as they imagined, suitable to the nature of the crimes committed in this life: They have described the habitation of the wicked as dismal and terrible: Nay Plutarch speaks of *ποταμῶν φλεγόμενων*, burning rivers in Hades.

The



The whole substance of what was thus suggested by the light of nature, received its confirmation from our Saviour; so that those booding thoughts, and fearful apprehensions of future vengeance were cleared up into a certainty: And whereas before, men could not be reasoned into a full perswasion of the truth of it without difficulty; it is now hard for a man to reason himself or others out of it, since there is an express and positive revelation superadded to the surmises of reason and conscience; which if Christ had performed nothing farther, this great motive to virtue and goodness must have received a mighty additional force, and have influenced the lives and consciences of men more strongly; and by that means have contributed much to the improvement of all moral goodness. But beyond this the Gospel hath improved this doctrine in many particulars; it hath discovered to us, that there is a decreed and determinate time for this future judgment. Acts xvii. 31. *For God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.* And whereas no one before our Saviour ever thought of any other judgment, but what immediately followed upon the departure out of the body; we are now clearly informed that there will be a general judgment of all mankind together. 2 Cor. v. 19. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether*

SERM. *it be good or bad*: It is revealed to us farther  
 XIV. *that, of that day and hour knoweth no man;*  
 } *no not the Angels in heaven*: And that as the  
 days of Noah were, *so shall also the coming of*  
*the son of man be*: For as in the days that  
*were before the flood, they were eating and*  
*drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,*  
*until the day that Noah entered into the ark;*  
*and knew not until the flood came and took*  
*them all away*; so shall also the coming of the  
 son of man be. Thus we are besides ex-  
 pressly told who will be our judge, John v.  
 22. *God hath committed all judgment unto the*  
*son*. And Acts x. 42. It is said, *that it is he*  
*which was ordained of God to be the judge of*  
*quick and dead*. The revelation is now so  
 particular, that the very circumstances of his  
 coming are described. Math. xxiv. 29, 30.  
*The powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then*  
*shall appear the sign of the son of man in the*  
*heavens*; and then shall all the tribes of the  
 earth mourn; and they shall see the son of man  
 coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and  
 great glory; and he shall send his Angels with  
 a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall ga-  
 ther together his elect from the four winds, from  
 one end of heaven to the other. And Math. xxv.  
 31. *When the son of man shall come in his glory,*  
*and all the holy Angels with him*; then shall he  
 sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him  
 shall be gathered all nations; and he shall sepa-  
 rate them one from another, as a shepherd di-  
 videth his sheep from the goats; and he shall  
 set

*set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats* SERM.  
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*on his left.* Where was there extant among all mankind any such account as this of a general judgment? Where is there any thing to be found among Jews or Heathen, that will raise in us such a perfect idea of the solemnity of that great day, like the vision of St. John. Revel. xx. 11, 12, 13. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works.* How feeble and trifling would the loftiest flights and elevated strains of Jewish or Heathen writers appear, if compared with this? And where else, but in the Gospel, is to be found the very words of the sentence that will be pronounced upon the wicked? Math. xxv. 41. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.* Sure I am, that till we actually come to see all this, it is impossible for words to give us a more comprehensive and lively notion of what expects us at the last day. The revelation of the Gospel hath



SERM. carried the matter as far as we are capable of  
 XIV. receiving it; and human nature hath not capacities for a farther information in this world: We neither need nor can know more than what Christ himself hath told us, John v. 28, 29. *That the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Now this state of misery which is to follow that sentence, the Heathen it is true did conceive it under the most formidable images their fancies could afford; and some of them represented the infernal punishments under the notion of fire: And indeed though it was a thought very natural, for men to conceive the punishment of the wicked in another world, by the most acute and pungent pains they were liable to in this life; yet this notion was but the result of some men's reasoning; and it passed in the world as an opinion, in which some few were singular: But now it is improved into a certainty, and hath received an undoubted evidence and confirmation from the Gospel: It is no longer a surmise or an opinion only, but a revelation from heaven, that the wicked shall be *cast into hell fire, where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched*: In which words there is something farther revealed, that never was known before; namely, the endless duration  
 of


of those torments. And now I may ask who, SERM.  
XIV.  
before our Saviour, ever asserted positively that  
the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment? And where is there any thing to  
be found, in all the ages of the world before,  
so express and peremptory as these words,  
Revel. xxi. 8. that *the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murthurers, and who, emongers, and forcerers, and Idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.* And again, Rev. xx. 10. that they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Now if any one, in favour of natural religion, should object, that the substance of all this was known before Christ came into the world; then they own what our Saviour hath taught is agreeable to the natural sentiments of men; and it must be owned that the Gospel is a good improvement of natural light: And this was our Saviour's design, who declares *he came not to destroy, but to fulfill.* However this doctrine came into so clear a light, yet it is plain mankind hath it now; and whether from the light of nature, or from immediate revelation, it is originally from God; and therefore ought to have its due effect upon us: Whether Christ spoke this of himself, or from God, yet it is evident he hath spoke more to the purpose than ever any man did before; and consequently hath done more than all men before him, towards the  
restraining

SERM. restraining of all manner of wickedness, and  
 XIV. the improvement of all virtue and goodness.

~ The prospect of future punishment was ever a motive among men; but it never could influence the fears of men so powerfully as now that *the wrath of God is so plainly revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*; i. e. who cannot disbelieve the truth of these future punishments, and yet live as if they did not fear them. Could the uncertain reasonings and dubious surmises of futurity restrain the lusts and appetites of men, and deter them from the committal of all manner of sin, as forcibly as *a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation*? Was it possible for mortal men to have such a regard to the thoughts of their hearts, as now that we are thoroughly convinced that there will be *a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*? Rom. ii. 16. Could any thing be such a curb and restraint to the tongues of men, as that saying of our Saviour's; that *every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment*? Could the faint commendations only of chastity and continence, by the wiser Heathen, prevail upon mankind to restrain their lusts, like a full assurance, that *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*? And is there such another saying, as this of our Saviour's, extant in the world beside,



side ; *what shall it profit a man if he gains the* SERM.  
*whole world and lose his own soul? And what* XIV.  
*shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* 

Now by as much as these great motives to religion in general are rendered more strong and powerful by the Gospel, so far is all morality advanced to a higher pitch by it: It must necessarily make men more strictly just and upright, more religious and reserved, more chaste and temperate ; and make them more afraid of offending God or man by the committal of any sin or wickedness whatsoever ; or any way to provoke that vengeance which now they are assured will overtake them in another world ; and this is improving morality into christianity, so that by thus practising morality in the true perfection of it, men become good christians.

These motives to all virtue and goodness are so far improved by the Gospel, that they can never fail of their effect, when they are duly considered and applied ; and it is no derogation from the strength and power of them, that they work upon so few in the world. God hath made no provision for the salvation of any one who will not think, and consider ; and who will not think to purpose too. These things of another world, by a strange fallacy of our sight, appear to be at a mighty distance ; and therefore must be made present to the mind by meditation, and frequent application of them to our consciences : Just as far as we consider them, so far they will

S E R M. will influence us, and no farther; and they  
 XIV. who will not be at the trouble and pains,  
 and uneasiness to do this, will be eternally  
 undone, only for want of the same applica-  
 tion of their minds to religion, which is com-  
 mon in the ordinary affairs of this life. A  
 man may bring himself perfectly under the  
 power of these motives with half the trouble,  
 and anxiety, and thought, by which he gets  
 an estate, or an employment; and yet he  
 loses heaven and happiness for want of it:  
 It is just as a man lets his mind run, *where*  
*his treasure is, there will his heart be.* If his  
 heart is set upon the riches, or splendor, or  
 vanities of this world, the whole current of  
 his thoughts will be that way; all his passions  
 and affections will be exercised upon them,  
 and these alone will move and turn him, and  
 have an absolute command over all the powers  
 of his mind: But if he sets his heart upon  
 the things of another life, then the motives  
 of the Gospel take place; they get the pos-  
 session of his soul; they strike his imagination  
 with a lively vigour: The promises encourage  
 him under the greatest uneasiness; and the  
*terrors of the Lord* give a check to the first  
 motions of sin; his mind dwells upon them,  
 and they are ever ready to be applied upon all  
 assaults of temptation: And thus the success  
 of these motives is according to the use we  
 make of them; the more we think of them,  
 the more they will sway us; and if we never  
 think of them, they will never move us. As  
 men

men set themselves to the work of religion, and make it their business and the great subject of their thoughts, so they will understand and relish the things of another life; they will be reconciled to them, till at last they are pleased and delighted with the contemplation of them: But on the contrary, if they bend their thoughts another way, so as to neglect the attainment of virtue and goodness; they will slight and despise these spiritual motives; they will grow into a contempt and disregard of them; they will lose all sense and feeling of them; till at last they are easy in their ignorance and their impiety, and value any, the least trifling worldly knowledge, beyond them.

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And from hence appears the necessity and excellence of an abstracted piety, and frequent retirement for meditation, so it runs not into frenzy and superstition; because without a good degree of it, these motives to virtue and holyness can never work a due effect upon our souls. No man whatever, who thought often enough of *everlasting burnings*, and considered how much reason he had to believe the truth and certainty of them, would ever continue in the known practice of any one wilful sin. And any one who, by frequent meditation, hath impregnated his imagination strongly with the glorious promises of another life, would never think any pleasure, this world affords, too great to be quitted for them. I shall conclude with the words of St.

Peter,



SERM. Peter, 2 Epist. iii. 10, 11, 12. which we are  
XIV. to depend on for a great truth, because they  
so far exceed all that ever was spoken upon  
that subject before; and therefore were they  
not true, he had not been able to have spoke  
them: If the particulars of what is said had  
fallen within the sphere of human under-  
standing, it would have been known before;  
and its being so long concealed is a sufficient  
evidence, that we have them from divine re-  
velation; the words are these, *The day of the  
Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the  
which the heavens shall pass away with a great  
noise; and the elements shall melt with fervent  
heat; the earth also, and the works that are  
therein, shall be burnt up: Seeing then that all  
these things shall be dissolved, what manner of  
persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation  
and godliness: Looking for and hastening unto  
the coming of the day of God, wherein the hea-  
vens being on fire shall be dissolved; and the  
elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

S E R M O N

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## S E R M O N X V.

Christ came to fulfil the Law.

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MATTH. V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

**M**Y design from these words was, to SERM.  
consider in what sense Christ came XV.  
to fulfil the moral law; and what the true nature of that improvement is, which morality or the law of nature received from the Gospel. I think it hath already appeared that it is not so much in kind, as in degree: The means by which our Saviour improved the law of nature, I observed, were adapted to the two faculties in man, which were blinded and depraved, namely the understanding, and the will: And they were these;

1. By his explaining the law of nature, or moral law, in a greater latitude than ever it was received or understood before, since our original state of innocence.

2. By

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2. By making provision for the performance of it by human nature, in a more exalted and elevated degree.

I have finished the first of these ; and as to the second I observed there were several means used by our Saviour in order to the exaltation of morality, and the raising of all virtue and goodness to a higher pitch than what was practicable upon principles of natural reason. Accordingly,

1. The first thing performed by our Saviour in order to this was the taking away temporal rewards and punishments, and substituting spiritual sanctions instead of them, suitable to the nature of his kingdom ; and as to the rewards of another life, though they were known to the Heathen, as I observed, in a good degree, yet this knowledge was carried on and improved in so many instances by our Saviour, that he might very properly be said to have brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

2. The second means by which this was performed, was by a clearer revelation of a future judgment ; which though the Jews and Heathen were not unacquainted with, yet was improved in several particulars which I instanced in. In each of these I shewed the aptness and tendency those revelations had to advance the whole state of morality ; and to improve all manner of virtue and goodness to a much greater height than was practicable without them ; wherefore I am now to proceed



ceed to the third thing performed by our Saviour, and that is,

3. The clear discovery of a divine supernatural assistance of the mind of man in the prosecution of virtue and holiness. That the grace of God or immediate influence of his spirit upon ours, in order to heal the corruptions and assist the infirmities of our nature, was afforded to mankind in all ages from the beginning, I think will admit of no great doubt; if it be well considered, that upon any other supposition it will be unsolvable how mankind should be rendered inexcusable before the righteous judgment seat of God; since the corruption of our nature was such that it took away all capacity for virtue and goodness without such assistance. If God entered into a covenant, as he did with all mankind in the beginning, it must have been with such as should be able to perform the conditions; and this divine assistance alone could give them abilities for it, so as to render them liable to the just condemnation of God, if they failed in the performance. It was a purchase made for human nature by Christ, and dispensed in prospect of that great sacrifice he was to offer up in the fulness of time: It was concealed indeed in a great degree together with the satisfaction he was to make, and yet, by the covenant of God made with all men from the beginning, all generations had a title to partake of the influences of both.

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Nor was this gift of God altogether unknown to the world before the price was paid for it; it made some discoveries of it self in the minds of good men in all ages; and the most considering even of the Heathen have expressed the sense they had of a divine assistance in order to religion and virtue. It is to this that Pythagoras is thought to have alluded in that emblematical expression of his, *discourse not of Pythagorean, or divine things, without light*, i. e. without the divine assistance: And that which makes this sense of it to be more probable is that Clemens Alexandrinus observes, that the followers of Pythagoras held that the mind or understanding came to men *θεία μοίρα*, by a divine lot; in which expression he says was obscurely hinted that gift of the spirit which is now come to light; and adds, that this was the opinion of Plato and Aristotle; (Clem. Al. Strom. lib. 5. p. 430.) the former of which plainly asserts, that no man can attain to a right knowledge of divine things, *εἰ μὴ θεὸς ὑφηγήσῃτο*, unless God lead him into it. (See more quotations to this purpose, P. Fan. p. 272.) It was a general persuasion, *nemo vir magnus sine aliquo divino afflatu*, and the opinion of the soul's being *particulam auræ divinæ*, was but a very natural mistake for the communication of God's spirit to the mind of man. This opinion prevailed so antiently and universally, that in the entrance upon any great work they solemnly invoked the inspiration of the Muses; and as Lucian speaks by way of jest,


jest, whatever they spoke by their assistance  
 ἀληθῆ τὰυτα ἐστίν, those things are true; but when  
 they were left to themselves, τότε δὴ καὶ σφάλλονται,  
 then they are deceived. (Jov. Confut.) It was  
 to elude the effect and efficacy of this opinion  
 of inspiration in the world, that the Devil had  
 so many oracles and inspired Priests, and par-  
 ticularly that of Apollo in Delphos; from  
 whence Plato affirms, that all truth was to  
 be brought concerning divine things; that  
 God only, says he, is the true and genuine  
 interpreter of things of that nature, who re-  
 sides ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς ἐπὶ τῷ ὀμφαλῷ, in the very navel  
 of the earth, as that island was esteemed to  
 be. (Plat. de Rep. l. 4.)

The knowledge of this divine assistance  
 cleared up farther among the Jews, as ap-  
 pears from those plain expressions of David,  
*Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance;  
 give thy strength unto thy servant, and help  
 the son of thy hand maid. O quicken me after  
 thy loving kindness, and so shall I keep the testi-  
 monies of thy mouth, &c.* These and the like  
 frequent expressions shew, that he lived under  
 a constant sense of the necessity of some aid  
 from God, in order to the observance of his  
 laws: And this point opened yet farther to  
 the world by the succeeding Prophets, who  
 make express mention of God's pouring out  
 his spirit upon all flesh.

Now, though this divine assistance was  
 both dispensed, and known in some degree  
 before the preaching of the Gospel; yet what



SERM. we properly call the grace of God, that principle of spiritual life, may truly be said to be brought to light by our Saviour Jesus Christ; he having opened the understandings of men, and given us a more distinct and perfect view of this great point in several particulars.

XV.  I. For first, though both Jews and Hea-then had some conviction of the necessity of an inward divine assistance, yet they knew not what it was; but now we understand plainly that it is not only a general influence from God upon our minds, but the actual immediate communication of God's holy spirit to us. John xiv. 16, 17. *And I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.*

i. e. That spirit hath been hitherto unknown to the world; nor will men easily submit to the belief of him, because he is no way discernible by sense or reason: But the apparent operations and effects of this spirit in you, will be a clear evidence of his existence and operation: *But ye know him, because he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you:* And agreeably to this revelation, this divine influence of the spirit of God upon our souls is expressed Titus iii. 6. by the holy Ghost's being *shed on us abundantly:* And by reason of this immediate presence of this spirit with us we are called, *the temple of God.* Its descending upon the Apostles in a visible appearance, was to shew the  
the

the truth and reality of the descent of that spirit which was invisible. And our Saviour's breathing on them when they received the holy Ghost, was in that emblem to express the actual communication of that spirit for the renovation of their souls, by which it was first formed; and to shew that their regeneration was effected by as real and immediate an act as their first creation.

This was a degree of knowledge out of the reach of human reason; though they were sensible of a divine assistance, yet what the Ephesians said of themselves, Acts xix. 2. was true of all ages and nations of the world before Christ, that they never so much as *heard whether there were any Holy Ghost*. The knowledge of this distinction of the holy Ghost from God the father was reserved till the third person in the trinity came to light, and then plainly discovered: And to make it the more taken notice of, he is distinctly expressed in the words of the commission given to the Apostles, *go teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost*: And because the last person was most liable to be mistaken for the same, in all respects, with God the father, to prevent any such mistake, this operation of grace is every where attributed to him in distinction from the father, and the son: So that this is a distinction of God's own making, and all the subtilty of man will never be able

SERM. to reason it away. I shall only observe here,  
XV. how that those who deny this doctrine would  
reduce us back again to heathenish ignorance and infidelity. All the reasonings of men upon this point will be summed up in this at last; that here we find a difference made, but how great or how little it is in reality, with respect to the real nature of God, will be impossible to say or determine. In spite of all objection and cavil, where this difference is found, there it will remain till the day of judgment, till the book is opened, to the utter confusion of all those who, when God hath made a plain distinction, do however boldly affirm there is none: We take the distinction as we find it in the Gospel, and wait till God gives us farther light into it in another world. How profound are the revelations and the nature of Almighty God? How superficial and trifling are the acutest reasonings of vain short-sighted mortals?

2. But secondly, before the preaching of the Gospel, this divine inspiration was thought not to have been given for any other purpose but enlightening the understandings of men, not to influence their wills and affections; and enable them for the restraining of their appetites, and governing their passions, which is the subject of all virtue. Though the wiser Heathen were ready enough to attribute every thing else to providence, nay even their knowledge of divine things; yet they would have  
their



their virtue all their own: (Cicero de n. Deo. SERM. lib. 3.) They utterly rejected all assistance, XV. either human or divine, for that purpose, and removed it from the nature of true virtue; esteeming every degree of such assistance a derogation to it.

But now, by the Gospel, we are not only more perfectly informed concerning the illumination of the understanding, by the descent of the holy Ghost in a visible shape; and those miraculous gifts which were the effects of it: But we learn likewise, that this divine influence of the spirit is necessary in order to the attainment of all virtue and goodness; and to the sanctification of the mind and conscience. Rom. xv. 16. We are said to be *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*. We now know that it is through this spirit that *we mortify the deeds of the body*; and that by it we are *changed* into the image or likeness of God *from glory to glory*: And in short we learn that all manner of virtue and goodness, *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are all the fruits of the spirit*: It is from this clear revelation of the immediate presence of a divine person to operate upon our minds, that those words in the Gospel of sanctifying, and renewing, regeneration, a new creature, and being born again take their signification, and become intelligible: The true import of which phrases was not understood before, as they are applied to that reformation and change that is wrought

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in the minds and consciences of men, by the concurrence of a divine assistance; from a state of natural corruption, to an habitual sense of virtue and holiness.

Now had the Gospel carried the mind of man but thus much farther in the knowledge of this divine principle of a spiritual and holy life, it must have contributed in no small degree to the encouragement and promoting of all virtue and goodness in mankind: But besides, this motive is rendered more quick and powerful by our information in several other particulars relating to it. We learn that this power and energy of the spirit of God is nothing more than an assistance; that it only *helpeth our infirmities*; that it operates in concurrence with our natural faculties, without the least violence to the freedom of our wills; and so far only as to put the healing our corruptions, and the conquest of all the vicious tendencies of our nature in our own power; and therefore leaves room for rewards and punishments, from the justice and the mercy of God; the want of which knowledge was the ground of that mistake of the Heathen, in rejecting all, even a divine concurrence in the attainment of virtue; little imagining, what we are now sufficiently convinced of, that without this divine influence we cannot so much as think a good thought; and that God's preventing grace is necessary to the first motions of good in us.

We

We are farther informed, that it is in con- SERM.  
XV.  
templation of the merits of Christ that this  
grace is afforded. Titus iii. 5, 6. *He hath  
saved us by the renewing of the holy Ghost,  
which is shed on us abundantly, through Jesus  
Christ our Saviour.* We are taught that this  
grace of God works in us with a real efficacy,  
though the manner of its operation is altoge-  
ther undiscernible, any other way than by  
its effects. John iii. 8. *The wind bloweth where  
it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof;  
but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither  
it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit.*  
We now know that this spiritual assistance is  
to be obtained by prayer, that God will give  
*the holy spirit to them that ask him.* James  
i. 5. And that it is dispensed in still greater  
degrees, according to the use that is made of  
it, and the improvement of that portion of  
grace that hath been already received, *to him  
that hath shall be given, and from him that  
hath not shall be taken away, even that which  
he hath.* We are now informed, that as this  
spiritual principle forms our minds inwardly  
to virtue and holiness here, by slow and im-  
perceptible degrees; so it puts both body and  
soul into a disposition for that great change  
that is to be wrought in us in another world;  
and unites us so to the person of Christ, that  
by virtue of it we shall become partakers of  
a blessed resurrection. Rom. viii. 11. *But if  
the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from  
the*



SERM. *the dead dwell in you, be that raised up Christ*  
 XV. *from the dead shall also quicken your mortal*  
 { *bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you. We*  
*are plainly warned against all neglect or*  
*misuse of this divine gift, for that by yielding*  
*to the sinful appetites and inclinations of our*  
*nature in opposition to its suggestions, we*  
*grieve the holy spirit of God, whereby we are*  
*sealed unto the day of redemption* Eph. iv. 30.  
*We are said by habitual and obstinate impiety*  
*to do despite to the spirit of grace.* Heb. x. 29.  
*And that by neglect the spirit may be intirely*  
*quenched and extinguished in us; and then*  
*we are given over to a final impenitence, and*  
*separated from God for ever. And lastly we*  
*are fully informed, concerning this divine*  
*principle of eternal life, that it will surely*  
*prevail, and can never fail in the end if we*  
*are not wanting to ourselves. My strength is*  
*sufficient for thee,* was spoke to St. Paul under  
 a great temptation, for the information of all  
 ages; to convince us of this great truth, 1 Cor.  
 x. 13. that God *will never suffer us to be*  
*tempted above what we are able, but will with*  
*the temptation also make a way to escape that*  
*we may be able to bear it.*

All these things are distinctly and plainly  
 revealed to us, concerning a supernatural di-  
 vine assistance, of which mankind before had  
 but a confused and general notion. And will  
 any one now ask what our Saviour hath done  
 towards filling up the moral law; and the  
 exaltation of all virtue and goodness to such  
 degrees

degrees of perfection, as were unattainable SERM.  
upon the stock of that knowledge men had XV.  
by the light of nature? The weakness of hu-  
man nature was ever the complaint of the  
most considering Heathen, and gave a check  
to all their efforts after virtue; and had con-  
tinued to be so still, were it not for this light  
that is let in upon our souls by the revelation  
of the Gospel: The very discovery of grace  
gives a new spring to all the powers of the  
mind, and a mighty additional vigour to all  
our endeavours. Nothing is so apt to dis-  
courage us in any enterprize as a sense of our  
infirmity; it begets such dejection and despon-  
dency, as hinders us from aspiring to any  
brave and generous attempts: Men before this  
revelation looked upon our natural corruption  
to be insuperable, and therefore gave them-  
selves up to it; they yielded themselves to be  
carried down the stream of their inclinations,  
thinking it in vain to resist or strive against  
the current they were not able to stem. But  
now we have a mighty advantage in being  
made acquainted with our strength, and the  
weakness of our enemies. Is it a small thing  
to be taught to pray incessantly for this as-  
sistance; and to know assuredly, that we are  
supported in the prosecution of holiness by  
that spirit that is almighty; by the same spirit  
that was in Christ, and therefore must prevail  
at last over all the powers of hell? Is it a  
slight thing to be sure of the victory in the  
midst of the engagement; and that we can  
never

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never finally miscarry but for want of making use of the assistance afforded us? How must it raise the mind of a sincere Christian above all temptation and difficulty, to consider, *that through God that strengthens us we shall be able to do all things*: That the Lord of hosts is with him, and that though he wrestles not only against flesh and blood, *but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world*; that however he may be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*? How little a portion must they have of this spirit left, who do not see what an unexpressible additional force this motive to all goodness hath received from the Gospel: Their ignorance is not to be wondered at, since this presence and blessed influence of the spirit of God is no way to be discerned but by its own light. Grace is a ray from that glory which illuminates the spiritual and intellectual world; and when this is cut off and intercepted, men are as necessarily blind to all things spiritual, as a man who hath lost his eyes is to sensible objects: Whereas to those who cherish it, it becomes eternal life and salvation. I shall only offer one thing, the consideration of which may be of good effect, in minds where this spiritual illumination is not quite extinct; namely, that it will one day appear a deplorable thing, to have received this *grace of God in vain*; and for no other purpose but to render a man utterly inexcusable, when he comes to appear before his tribunal. And this brings me



me to the fourth thing performed by our Sa-  
viour, for the improvement and exaltation of  
morality or the law of nature. And that was

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4. By giving a lively example to the world, of the practice of virtue and holiness in that exalted and elevated degree, to which his doctrine had raised it : In this sense likewise he is literally said to have fulfilled the law and the Prophets, having not only accomplished all that was foretold concerning him from the beginning of the world ; but having performed exact unfinning obedience to the moral law, or rather to the law of nature in its fullest extent : he lived up to what it was in the first perfection of our creation, and transcribed again upon human nature what was lost by the fall : He did not transgress one jot or one tittle of that eternal law of God, which opened to the world gradually, and received its consummation by the Gospel : He lived in the practice of all virtue and holiness, in the most exalted strains of them imaginable ; insomuch that at his death he offered himself up *a lamb without spot, and without blemish.* Which of you convinceth me of sin ? was a challenge made not only to the Jews he spoke to, but to all generations of men ; insomuch that, among the many objections made against christianity by its most inveterate enemies, there never was any charge of immorality upon its author : The utmost evidence against him at his tryal was, that he said what he afterwards performed,

SERM. performed, that he would raise the temple of  
 XV. his body after they had destroyed it; and were  
 { it not for his own seasonable and free confession of that doctrine he was arraigned for, which was then matter of duty, they could have found no pretence to put him to death, namely by owning that he was *the Christ the son of God*; and saying, *hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Now though the consummate perfection of this example may at first sight seem to frighten and discourage, and be an object only of our wonder and amazement; yet the life of Christ is a very apt and proper example for our imitation and encouragement; for by that means we are fully convinced what human nature is capable of. Had he given us precepts of such perfection without the practice of them, the objection would have ever held against the Gospel, that it was too refined for flesh and blood, and calculated only for a life of Angels. The attributes and perfections of the Divinity are the standard of all virtue and holiness, and the transcribing of these upon the humanity in the person of Christ, shews mankind how near they may come to the likeness of God. Christ's performing all goodness in our nature is a conviction to us what it once was, and what it may be again: It shews us that our infirmities are to be overcome; that our passions and affections are all to be regulated and restrained; that we are to be brought  
 into

into our own power, our understandings en-SERM.  
lightned, and our wills rectified; and that no XV.  
temptation of the world, the flesh or the De-  
vil is insuperable.

Though our Saviour was God as well as man, yet he had a feeling of our infirmities, and was *in all things tempted like unto us, sin only excepted*. He became subject to the imperfections of humanity, to shew how far human nature was capable of the perfections of God: And it is for this very reason we are told this, that our manifold infirmities might not dishearten and discourage us from perseverance. It is true we can never come up to the pattern he set us, but we are made sensible that God will accept of a hearty and sincere endeavour, and dispense with those infirmities which necessarily follow our nature, and are altogether insuperable. Our imperfect obedience is to be accepted upon account of his that was perfect, and when once the general tendency of our minds is to all virtue and goodness, so that we heartily aspire to it, and that our wills are set straight; then the mighty working of the Spirit to sanctify us will make up what is wanting; so that in another life we shall be possessed of intire innocence and holiness. We have the assistance of this same Spirit that was in Christ; and though he had it without measure, yet it is afforded to us in such a measure as will be sufficient for us. As he had the fulness of the Spirit, so neither are we stinted to any fixed  
or




SERM. or determinate portion of it. If we by diligence and perseverance improve those degrees  
 XV. afforded us, we shall be still blessed with new accessions of this divine emanation; so that we cannot say where or when it will end. We shall be making still nearer approaches to the similitude of our great example, till virtue and goodness grows into our temper and constitution, till it is easy and pleasant, and at last delightful; and when we have arriven at this excellent degree of holiness, we shall not stop there neither, but aspire yet farther, the more we are filled, the greater will be that thirst which God hath promised to satisfy; to use the Apostle's phrase the *Holy Ghost will be shed on us abundantly*, and after all this there are greater portions of it yet to come.

What the power of signal and uncommon virtue in the general is, for the promoting of the like in others, hath been always felt by those who have any ambition left; nothing strikes the mind so feelingly, as the prospect of a bright example; it stirs up a sense of shame, that puts the mind upon exerting its utmost vigour: That another who is but a man should do it, and not I who have it equally in my power! This is emulation, the greatest spur in human nature to urge us on to all that is good, and great, and virtuous: Nay this will make us resolve beyond our own strength, and leave the spirit of God to enable us for the performance.

But

But where shall we find such another pattern for our imitation as Christ the son of God! S E R M. XV.

the most virtuous and holy men recorded in Scripture have had their failings, and the best of them the greatest; and though the lives of those holy men are not without their use and influence, yet without an absolute and consummate holiness, no one could be an universal standard for all mankind to fix their eyes upon: And as for those names among the heathen most celebrated for virtue and goodness, besides that the account we have of their virtues is feigned and imaginary, full of proud affectation and singularity at the best, and the relation uncertain; their memories are stained with many instances of gross immoralities: But the life of Christ is delivered down to us with great plainness and sincerity, as having been pure and unspotted; and the world hath not been able to find one flaw in his character. His was no imaginary, but a real and substantial holiness; no way beholding to the pen or the invention of those who have described it; but appears in the simplicity of the Gospel relation to have been such as far exceeded all description: And the wisdom of God contrived it so as to render this great example conspicuous to the world; by timing the life of our Saviour so as to afford opportunities for the exercise of the most exalted virtues and graces that the human nature was capable of; by leaving him expos'd to poverty, to contempt and disgrace, to en-

SERM. XV.  dure the contradiction of sinners, and undergo all the malice and evil treatment that an ignorant and incensed zeal could suggest, towards one who laboured to cure them of their superstition and hypocrisy; and at last voluntarily to undergo an ignominious and painful death, for the sake of the very persons who crucified him; insomuch that he breathed out his soul in a prayer for them.

How must this example contribute to the exalting of all goodness among men? How must it encourage us to see that all that is required from us and much more hath been already performed in our nature? that there is allowance made for our infirmities, that we are assisted by the same Almighty Spirit of God? This is a powerful motive to all goodness; but it will lose its effect in those who do not place this divine example before their eyes; by often considering the particulars of his deportment and behaviour. It is true he alone could lead the way to this stupendous height of evangelical holiness; but we may follow, and by carrying him evermore in our view, we shall in one sense overtake him at last, and become fellow heirs with him of a glorious immortality.

4. A fourth thing performed by our Saviour towards the advancement of morality, and improvement of all virtue and goodness, is the giving to mankind a solid foundation for our hopes of pardon for sin and reconciliation with God. This was the great thing  
the



the world wanted to know; the mighty point that employed their thoughts, and put mankind upon the search in all ages; and some considerable advances were made towards it before our Saviour's coming. The heathen had arriven to a great conviction of the guilt and corruption of human nature, πάντες ἄνθρωποι κακοί, was the saying of a Heathen (*Bias*); ἄνθρωποισι γὰρ τοῖς πᾶσι κοινόν ἐστι τὸ ἑαμαρτάνειν, was the saying of another (*Euripides*). They were persuaded of the opposition of sin to the nature of God, and that the leaving off of sin was the way to be restored to his favour; and they looked upon a sense of their own guilt and compunction of mind to be the ready means of amendment; εἰ βάλει ἀγαθὸς εἶναι, πρῶτον πίευσον ὅτι κακὸς εἶ, If you will be truly good, first be convinced that you are wicked (*Epiet.*) They saw the necessity of repentance and amendment of life, and the virtue of it in order to pardon and reconciliation. *Quem pœnitet peccasse, peccati est innocens*, says *Seneca*, (*Senec. Agam. p. ff. p. 342.*) All this even the heathen world was pretty well apprised of; but then is it not wonderful to consider how that they did not look upon all this to be sufficient; they could never bring themselves to imagine that the deepest sense of our own guilt and shame; the most free and full confession of it, with repeated prayers for mercy and pardon; the most sincere repentance and amendment of life; and entire dependence upon the goodness of God was

SERM. enough to bring them into his favour, and  
XV. render them innocent in his sight: Nay, which  
renders it yet more wonderful, though they  
had a great opinion of the goodness of God;  
and how easy he was to forgive, no age or  
nation from the beginning of the world to our  
Saviour's time could acquiesce in all this, so  
as by a deep sense of their own guilt, and of  
the mercy of the divine nature to arrive to a  
settled peace of mind, and full persuasion of  
pardon for their sin and reconciliation with  
God. No, to the utter confusion of all So-  
cinianism, which is directly opposed to the  
sentiments of all mankind from the beginning,  
this opinion prevailed universally, that over and  
above all that, two things farther were yet  
necessary in order to the blotting out of sin,  
and obtaining the favour of God; one with  
respect to him, and another with respect to  
our selves; namely, sacrifices to appease the  
Divinity; and washing, to take out the stain  
of sin, and make us appear innocent. It is  
true they ran into many errors concerning  
them, and abused them to idolatry and su-  
perstition; but the substance of these things  
was ever retained, and the practice of them  
was directed to the same ends, *i. e.* obtaining  
mercy from God, and innocency in our selves.  
And that which is a yet greater cause of ad-  
miration, the custom of sacrifices and purga-  
tions made up the body and substance of all  
religions in the world, notwithstanding the  
universal persuasion of their want of efficacy  
to

to those ends they were intended; and though no tolerable reason could ever be assigned why they should be used at all, much less become the whole religion of the world. *Ah! nimium faciles qui tristia crimina cædis, Flumineâ tolli posse putatis aquâ.* SERM. XV.

The sacrifices and purgations among the Jews became a yet surer ground for hopes of pardon for sin, because they were the immediate appointment of God; and though men could not see the reason of it, yet this was a full conviction to them that God was to be appeased by some means or other, and sin to be done away, and man to be reconciled to God as if it had never been committed; though they were convinced that the most unfeigned repentance and amendment was not sufficient to that end; and that there was no real virtue and efficacy in all their sacrifices and purgations. And that which gave them a greater assurance and confirmation of this was, that full and free pardon, not only of outward transgressions which were atoned for by other sacrifices, but of all manner of sin, pronounced by God's appointment in the great anniversary one before the preaching of the Gospel.

Thus far had mankind proceeded in their hopes for pardon of sin by the help of reason, and those obscurer revelations afforded for that purpose: And even this hope of pardon for past offences put them upon a proportionable degree of repentance and amendment for the time to come; and by the in-



SERM. fluence of this motive many of them attained  
 XV. to commendable degrees of virtue and goodness.

Now this hope and prospect of pardon for sin when once committed, and of recovering unspotted innocence, of all motives hath the greatest energy and power to influence our lives to holiness and virtue; insomuch that without it all other motives to goodness would have been very feeble and ineffectual; and it is in the clearing up of this point that the great glory of the Gospel is glaring and conspicuous, which hath let in upon our souls a marvellous light, and improved that imperfect knowledge into a perfect day: For

1. We have a full and satisfactory account of that whole custom of sacrificing all the world over, which was altogether unaccountable before; and that they appeased God only as they pointed to that great sacrifice to be offered up in the person of Christ *once for all*; as the Apostle speaks *Heb. x. 10.* we are now taught that it is he who *hath made peace through the blood of his cross.* *Colos. i. 21.* that it is he who *takes away the sins of the world.* *John i. 29.* and that *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* We now learn who is our *price*, our *ransom* and propitiation; and what blood it was that was truly shed for the *remission of sins.* And now I may ask where there is any thing in all reason or revelation so solid a foundation for hopes of mercy and pardon as this? Nay where was the remission of sin preached

preached but in the name of Christ? Put together all that hath been said upon this subject from the beginning of the world to our Saviour's time, and see whether it will all amount to the satisfaction given to the mind of man in this great point by that one passage in *Heb. ix. 26.* which tells us that Christ now once in the consummation of the ages, *hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* Which words do in short give us a rational account of the continued practice of all ages before him; and unfolds the mystery of all God's dispensations from the beginning of the world; and takes away all those doubts and scruples for the time to come which perplexed the world in this great point. The wit of man was at work for about four thousand years, and yet could never arrive to the knowledge of any means for the pardon of sin, on which the guilty mind of man could rest. All considering men had a great distrust of the virtue of their sacrifices, well knowing from the light of reason, *that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin.* *Moritur cur victima pro te?* was always a doubt, and is not capable of any other solution but that of our Saviour's death, and the virtue of it; and the subtlest Socinian brain will never be able to give a reason why the custom of sacrificing should not be yet continued in the world upon their principles. Had the preaching of the Gospel given us such a clear conviction as we now have of the corruption of our nature, the

SERM. opposition of sin to the nature and attributes of  
 XV. God, and at what a distance it necessarily removes us from him; and at the same time, not have revealed to us the means of our cure and reconciliation with God, the minds of all considering men would have sunk into the depth of anguish and despondency: Nay even of those very persons who now reject the divine virtue and efficacy of that sacrifice which is the only solid foundation that mankind ever had for the hope of pardon of guilt, and the reconciling of sinful man to a pure and holy God.

2. As to the other thing which in the current sense of all ages was looked upon to be necessary to the doing away of sin, and without which the most unfeigned repentance and amendment of life was never thought in any age sufficient, namely that of their purgations and washings, we now have it confirmed and explained, that not only an atonement is necessary in respect of God, but a real purgation and cleansing in respect of us, and that nothing less than what was endued with a divine power and efficacy was able to take out the stain of sin. Accordingly we are now informed *John i. 7. that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; and Revelat. i. 5. that we are washed from our sins in his blood.* This is a plain and short account of what mankind with all their search could never arrive to before. This effects what all the water in the world could not do; all their washings and purgations



purgations were but symbolical representations SERM. XV.  
of the true and real efficacy of this blood; and this alone could shew, that the whole custom of purifications all the world over had not any meaning or design at all in them. What is the wondrous manner of the application of this blood to our souls; how it works this glorious effect, and purges our whole nature from the deepest dye of guilt, and perfectly restores its native innocence we know not. But this we know, that it is revealed to us from heaven that it will do so; and that if it had not been revealed we had never known as much as we do of it; and to the utter confusion of all who reject it, it receives this additional confirmation from the light of reason; that the whole course of providence, and chain of his dispensations from the beginning of the world, is clearly solved upon this principle; and the universal sense and practice of mankind, relating to sacrifices and purgations, accounted for, which are otherwise unaccountable.

Nor doth the Gospel only afford us this solid foundation for hope of pardon for the most wilful and deliberate sins repented of; but it gives us comfort with respect to the insuperable infirmities, and incurable frailties of human nature; which before the coming of Christ were much bewailed and lamented, but no ground ever offered for our support and encouragement under them. Our High-Priest is said to be *touched with a feeling of our infirmities*;

SERM. *firmities*; and for this reason we are bid to  
 XV. *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we*  
*may obtain mercy*: Good God! what an emphasis there is in the expression? and how apt to raise a soul desponding with a sense of guilt? He may now *come boldly to the throne of grace* for mercy; and though he finds nothing but weakness and imperfection in himself, yet *Christ through God is made unto him wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*. We are now informed, that where there is a sincere endeavour the grace of God will do the rest; the blood of Christ will wash away our guilt, and the holy spirit will form us inwardly to innocence and holiness; and put our whole nature into a disposition for a great and glorious change at the resurrection of the just.

Now let any one apply this to the subject I am upon, and then tell whether the giving the world so much satisfaction in this great point, hath not a direct tendency to cut off all manner of sin, and wickedness; and to promote and encourage all virtue and goodness, beyond what was practicable without it. Nothing is so great an inducement to repentance and amendment of life, as the hopes of a full and free pardon for all past offences; and nothing is so great an encouragement to labour after the attainment of great and commendable degrees of virtue, as the being assured that all merciful allowances will be made for the infirmities of nature; which  
 were

were ever a discouragement to virtue, and ever complained of: And this promise and assurance, together with the foundation it is built on, is to be had no where but in the Gospel. Both Jews and Heathen did hope for pardon of guilt, upon confession and forsaking of it; but they could not tell why they did so: But the Gospel gives a *reason of the hope that is in us*. The only reason that ever was or could be given before Christ, why men expected mercy for sin, was, because God was infinitely good: And this was an invincible reason why he should shew no mercy to sin, because it was so contrary to his nature: For if God be infinitely good, how can he be reconciled to any thing that is evil? But the Gospel gives a ground of hope that may be relied on. God will be reconciled to a sinner, because there is a propitiation made for our sins; and that, by a divine incomprehensible efficacy, the blood of Christ will wash away our guilt; and render us innocent in the sight of God. This can give perfect ease to the mind of man, labouring under a sense of guilt; the assurance of this goodness of God leads to repentance. Now we have this conviction that there is mercy with God, therefore shall he be feared: And it is impossible to imagine what the extent of that mercy for sin must be, which commands us to forgive our offending brother *not till seven times, but till seventy times seven*.



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# S E R M O N X V I.

Christ came to fulfil the Law.

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MATTH. V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

SERM.  
XVI.

**I** Have shewn you in some preceding discourses on this text, how Christ has performed these in many instances. I here point out the several things which our Saviour hath performed, in order to the advancement of all virtue and goodness in the world ; by thus enlarging the mind of man in the knowledge of these great and important points ; and letting in new lights upon the soul ; and shewn you that those motives to goodness have received a mighty additional force, and lively vigour, to influence the passions and affections of all who consider them ; and consequently to carry them on to the attainment of such degrees of virtue and holiness, as were not practicable without such revelation ; and this is properly refining

refining morality into christianity. I now SERM.  
XVI. propose, by way of application, to say something to the two sorts of people who run into the contrary extremes in this matter: But first I shall observe these following particulars, with relation to that improvement which morality hath received from the Gospel. And accordingly,

I. Though many of the Philosophers and wise men among the Heathen spoke many good things, and laid down very commendable rules for the attainment of virtue, and the conduct of human life; yet it must be owned, that Christ was the first ~~that~~ ever gave the world a compleat system of all morality, an intire sum of religion, and a perfect rule of life: It is confessed that the substance even of that golden rule, *Math. vii. 12. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them*, was extant in the world before Christ; yet he was the first that ever rendered it so universal, and declared it to be the law, and prophets. What scattered rules of morality were extant among the Heathen, were many of them no doubt owing to the moral part of the law of Moses; which, though the most compleat description of the law of nature extant before Christ, yet was but a general scheme and rough draught of the heads only of duty: Whereas the Gospel hath filled it up, and takes in the whole law of nature in its fullest extent: In-  
somuch that there cannot be one instance  
given

SERM. given of a point of duty either to God or  
 XVI. man, which is omitted: Nor hath the utmost malice ever yet assigned one tittle, which deviates from the strictest rules of right reason, and natural conscience: With such unspeakable nicety and exactness hath Christ separated all necessary truth from that falshood and error, with which it was perplexed and involved till his appearing.

Therefore, when men labour to confront the Gospel, by picking out scraps of heathen moralists, which seem to contain something of what our Saviour teaches; this is so far from being a disadvantage to christianity, that it is a great proof and confirmation of it; it shews that what our Saviour taught is pursuant to the more rectified understandings of men; that it all falls in with natural conscience, and adds new life and vigour to it: Because some heathen moralists, before Christ came, spoke some things to the same purpose that he doth; is this an argument against that doctrine, the whole aim and scope of which he declares to be, not to destroy any point of duty knowable by the light of nature, but to add a new light and improvement to it? If any one will urge this objection to purpose, let them shew any system of natural religion so complete and absolute in the world besides: Nay let them collect a body of natural religion out of all the books in the world besides; and when they have done, if it comes up to the



the life and spirit of christianity, we will then close with them, and embrace it: For they will find it will fall in with the Gospel, and be the same: But if they find it fall short of it, then let them own and confess that perfection they cannot reach; and submit their reason and faith with all humility and admiration.

SERM.  
XVI.

2. Another thing I shall observe is, that had the whole substance of the law of nature been extant in the world in its greatest latitude; nay, and been, as it is in the Gospel, distinguished and separated from all error and confusion; yet the confirmation which our Saviour gave it by his miracles, and the completion of prophecies in him, and that additional authority with which he preached the Gospel, must have contributed very much to the observance and practice of it among men. Though I know my duty to God in any particular by my own reason, by any deduction or consequence; yet if this same be revealed from heaven to be his will and his law; this shall bind it stronger upon me, and awe me into obedience: This is the very case of all mankind since the revelation of the Gospel, who have now received the law of God from him who spoke *as one having authority, and not as the scribes*. He did not speak as all before him did, who delivered the product only of their own thoughts, and sentiments of their own minds; what was agreeable to the reason of men only; and what they found in themselves

SERM. themselves by observation and experience.  
 XVI. But all that he taught was delivered from  
 heaven, as having received it immediately  
 from God. John vii. 16. *my doctrine is not  
 mine, says he, but his that sent me.*

And this shews us the true emphasis and  
 import of those expressions of our Saviour,  
 John viii. 29. *As my father hath taught me,  
 I speak these things.* John vii. 17. *If any  
 man will do his will, he shall know of the doc-  
 trine whether it be of God, or whether I speak  
 of my self;* a style of teaching altogether un-  
 known to the world before, which was the  
 cause of that astonishment with which the  
 Jews heard him. And the reason of that au-  
 thority was, that by this means all that was  
 known, even by the light of nature, might  
 receive a new force, by being thus made an  
 express and positive law. And accordingly  
 John xii. 48, 49. our Saviour himself ob-  
 serves, that this will render people without  
 all excuse in the day of judgment, who do  
 not obey the Gospel. *He that rejecteth me  
 and receiveth not my words, hath one that  
 judgeth him : The word that I have spoken shall  
 judge him in the last day ; for I have not spoken  
 of myself, but the father which sent me, he gave  
 me a commandment what I should say, and what  
 I should speak.* That which makes him so  
 full and express is, that it might appear to  
 the world, that the rules of virtue and holi-  
 ness in the Gospel are not only the original  
 and genuine laws of nature, but the eternal  
 laws

laws of God; of essential goodness and everlasting obligation; what we were at first made for, and what we must be framed to again, before we are admitted to the immediate presence of God and his holy Angels, who live by the same law. SERM.  
XVI.

3. Another thing performed by our Saviour, in order to the promoting of all virtue and goodness, which passes without observation because it is become common and familiar is, the appointing an order of men, in a continued succession, to preach the rules of morality, together with those improvements of divine knowledge, by which it is thus refined and exalted; which they are not to do as the result only of their own thoughts, and the dictates of natural conscience; but as the express and positive laws of God; and to perform this in his name and by commission from him.

Besides, all that profess the practice of virtue and goodness are by Christ separated from the rest of the world, and formed into a body to be governed by these laws, and incorporated by a spiritual charter; and the governors invested with a power of declaring the pardon of all repented sin; of receiving members into this body, and cutting them off: And this full power given in order to a visible distinction between the true practisers of virtue and holiness, and those who live in the contrary vices: And where this visible distinction is not kept up, but that moral and



SERM. immoral men compose this body promiscu-  
 XVI. ously, it is from the sinful neglect and omis-  
 sion of those who are invested with that  
 power from on high.

How much this forming the Church into a body corporate hath contributed to the suppression of all manner of vice and wickedness, and the advancing of all virtue and holiness, may easily be conceived from the account we have of the lives of those christians, who lived whilst this distinction was preserved; with the loss not only of all worldly riches and honours, but of their lives too. Before, this spiritual body became so blended with the civil state, that men lost the sight of all its privileges and immunities; and when ever it shall please God to put it into the hearts of men to revive them again, it will have the same glorious consequences. The Gospel will shine in its primitive lustre; and it will be plain and conspicuous to all, how much this forming the church into a spiritual body hath contributed to the advancement of all virtue and holiness in the world.

4. I shall observe that the matter is put upon a wrong issue, when men compare the doctrine of the Gospel with those moralists, who lived since the publication of it: For as the two tables of the moral law, delivered to the Jews, did contribute to the right knowledge of it in other nations as well as among them; so the whole state of morality was very much improved in all parts of the world, by the preaching

preaching of the Gospel: And it had this effect, not only among those who submitted to the faith and practice of it, but it contributed in no small degree to enlighten and refine the understandings, even of such as rejected the revelations of the Gospel; though they could neither discern nor own from whence the improvement came. Truth or intellectual light is as diffusive of itself, as that which is sensible; even at its first rising to the world, it darts its rays to the ends of the earth, and is the more conspicuous by the thick darkness that preceded. When once the Gospel took air, the substance of it was quickly conveyed from man to man, and from one nation to another; and spread insensibly by conversation, by discourse, and writings: And these doctrines of it were aptest to employ men's curiosity most, which seemed to have some resemblance of their sentiments of moral goodness, and to fall in with the principles of right reason.

In some time after our Saviour; when the Gospel became the common subject of men's inquiry and discourse; of their debate and contention; then succeeded that great improvement of what we call heathen morality by Epictetus; or rather Arrian; by Seneca; who was thought to have conversed with St. Paul; by Aurelius, and Plutarch, and Julian the Apostate, who carried over much riches, of the faith and profession he had deserted, to heathenism, and made it glorious with the

SERM. spoils of the Gospel; but concealed the in-  
 XVI. exhaustible treasure from whence he received  
 them: Like the moralists of our days he allowed the doctrine, but preposterously denied the author. So that we see what is called by the name of natural religion, since Christ, is in a great degree revealed; and for men to compare it with the morality of those Heathen who wrote since the publication of the Gospel, is in truth a comparing it with itself: And when men entertain any low thoughts of revealed religion upon that score, the dissimulatio[n] is the same, as if they should begin to fancy that light is not derived from the Sun, when they cannot discern its beams in their full brightness and splendor.

5. The last thing I shall observe upon this head is, that morality, or the law of nature, is now so exalted by the Gospel, that there is no room for any farther improvement. Christ hath performed what he declares, and hath filled up all that was wanting to the true knowledge of the law of God; and hath given as great light into the motives to the performance of it, as mankind is capable of in this world; which shews the Gospel to be the last dispensation; and that all divine revelation is by it closed and finished. Nothing farther can be necessary to perfect our nature; and we can never have more distinct and lively notions of the things of another life, than Christ hath given us, till we come to see them.

And



And from hence appears the deceit and emptiness of all imposture, if compared with the Gospel. It hath plainly appeared how many ways this hath contributed to the improvement of morality, and the exalting of all virtue and goodness in men: But no other religion whatsoever can pretend to this; there cannot be one instance given among all the religions in the world, of the explaining any one particular of the law of nature, in a sense beyond what it was understood before; nor any new light given by them into the great motives, which influence and sway the minds of men to virtue and goodness. Put the discoveries of all pretenders to new light and inspiration, that ever appeared since Christ, together; and then see whether there be one instance of the genuine law of nature, and rules of right reason in them, which hath been omitted by the Gospel. Whether they have carried on one moral virtue to a higher pitch, or in any degree improved our understandings in the knowledge of another world, beyond what hath been performed by our Saviour. If this be rightly weighed and considered, it will be found an invincible evidence of the truth and excellency of christianity; and that all attempts that have been made for the improvement of it, since it was first published, have been but so many disguises and corruptions.

Having thus performed what I proposed upon this subject, I shall only make a short

SERM. application of it to the two sorts of people,  
 XVI. who run into contrary extremes in this mat-  
 ter, and leave the truth in the middle.

1. The first sort are those who entertain a mean and despicable opinion of morality; as if Christ came to destroy it; as if he came to take it away wholly, and place the Gospel instead of it. They are exalted with the abundance of revelation till their heads are giddy; and from that height they look down upon all moral duties with contempt; little thinking that they are only blown up with the wind, and will surely have a desperate fall whenever the storm is laid: For all true morality is of the very essence of christianity, and cannot be separated from it but in imagination only: They differ only as a man differs from himself when he was a child; it is all one eternal law; the Gospel hath continued all the lineaments and proportion, and hath only given it a greater increase in all its parts; and by leaving out morality, they render christianity monstrous and deformed.

All the revelations of the Gospel have a natural tendency to promote and encourage the practice of those duties that were known by the light of reason; the main intent and design of them is to make men more moral than they were before. The Gospel doth not lay down rules for the practice of virtue and holiness, in such instances as were altogether unknown before; but supposes all the virtues and graces understood, and only urges

us on to more firmness and constancy in the performance of them. This is the constant style of the new testament, and particularly of this sermon upon the mount: *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth: So, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart, &c.* But he doth not in the least tell what poverty of spirit is, or meekness, or purity of heart; nor does he so much as hint what that righteousness is that we are to hunger and thirst after; because he supposes all these, in a great degree, already known by the light of nature. And so likewise St. Paul Philipp. iv. 8 exhorts men to the practice of all goodness in such a manner, as if he looked upon them to be no strangers to the nature of it. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* Our Saviour professes to give us but one new commandment, namely, *that we love one another.* And it is very remarkable how this is what men of enthusiastical principles are aptest to transgress, who appear fierce and violent for new light and gospel holiness, by setting up distinct communions under a notion of a more



SERM. refined and spiritual worship ; that is, in plain  
 XVI. terms, a religion which hath more of speculation, and less of that virtue and goodness which is knowable even by the light of nature ; which always carries this implication, though it be not expressed, *come not near me, I am holier than thou.* If we could see into men's hearts, we should find something of this disesteem of morality at the bottom of all heresy and schism, and the true cause of all separation from the true church in every age, is, because it insists too rigorously upon the discharge of all moral duties. These rags of morality, in their spiritual style, are in great part the riches of the Gospel ; and the truth of the matter is, that it is not beggarly, but troublesome morality. The difficulty of religion is in the moral part, and therefore they are for taking up with that part of it that hath less trouble, and more of shew, and by a nominal piety in their imagination only, they would compound for the restraining of their lusts and appetites, and governing of their passions.

I shall only observe farther to these people, that this is the very hypocrisy our blessed Saviour levels this whole discourse against. He was charged by the Pharisees, or Separatists as the word originally imports, with breaking and voiding of the law : He declares he came not to destroy the law of nature, or moral law, *but to fulfil it.* He puts the matter upon

on that issue, whether he or they are most S E R M. truly zealous for it, until heaven and earth XVI. pass, he affirms that one jot or one tittle of the law shall in no wise pass; and, in the following verse, allows it to be the fairest trial of a man, *whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, i. e. to break them, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, i. e. shall be esteemed no good Christian; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, i. e. the duties of the moral law, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, i. e. shall be a truly good and sincere Christian, verse 20. for I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:* And that the defect of their righteousness consisted in the corruption and neglect of that moral law, or law of nature, he shews by the many instances he gives in the sequel of that discourse.

2. But secondly, from what hath been said it appears, how groundless all those prejudices are which have been conceived against the Gospel, by such as go under the name of moralists. While they extol morality and the light of nature, they do not consider that they are crying up the Gospel, which takes it all in, does not leave out one jot or one tittle of it; but explains it more clearly, requires stricter obedience to it, and urges the observance of it with such motives as will render

SERM. der men's violation of it more inexcusable,  
 XVI. Moral goodness is a large and comprehensive  
 word, which takes in the whole sum of practical christianity; and these men of morality will be eternally lost and undone for this very reason, because they are not moral enough; because they must necessarily fall short of the practice of the law of nature in that exalted degree, which now goes by the name of evangelical holiness, without a serious and constant application of their minds to the motives of all religion, as they are cleared up by the Gospel. When these are once laid aside, or not duely considered; all virtue and goodness must necessarily diminish; since there is nothing extant in the world of equal force with them to incite and encourage men to the practice of it. Whatsoever is known by the light of nature, is all allowed and confirmed by the Gospel; and the more zeal men shew for that, the more inexcusable they render themselves, and those who do not live in obedience to it will stand condemned out of their own mouths; whatever christianity may add to the light of nature it diminishes nothing from it, but leaves it in its full force and perfection.

And then as for Honour, the only principle which some allow and profess to be acted by, it is a noble word abused to the meanest purposes, it carries delusion and cheat in it, than which nothing is more dishonourable; the very name of it insinuates a disesteem of  
 all



all revelation ; and the plain implication of it SERM.  
is, that it is of greater power and efficacy to XVI.  
restrain men from evil, and prompt them to  
the practice of virtue and goodness than all  
the motives of the Gospel. Honour, as it is  
used, is not only an empty and feeble, but  
an impious principle ; and the word intimates  
no less than a laying aside the authority of God,  
and being intirely influenced by the opinion  
of men. And accordingly by shaking off the  
motives of the Gospel to piety and holiness, it  
leaves men open to all manner of wickedness  
that may be hidden from the sight of men.  
When did honour ever restrain a man from a  
secret vice that was agreeable to him ? When  
did honour ever put a man upon rooting the  
very inclinations to sin out of his mind ; the  
very tendencies to lust and envy, covetousness  
and ambition ; so as to introduce the virtues  
of chastity and humility, of meekness and tem-  
perance, of patience and contentedness, and  
intire resignation of our selves to the will of  
God in all things ? Men given up to this af-  
fectionation, are living emblems of their own  
monuments when they are dead ; they are  
*whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful  
outwardly, but are within full of all uncleanness.*  
Though they appear righteous unto men,  
yet within they are full of hypocrisy and ini-  
quity. They have nothing of that true holi-  
ness and inward sanctification of their minds  
and

SERM. and consciences, which alone can recommend  
XVI. them to God, who is the searcher of hearts.

In short, there is nothing so honourable as a true spirit of christianity, and that empty notion of honour is a grand delusion of the devil, to take off the mighty force and efficacy of the promises and terrors of the Gospel. And there is this consequence attends those who set it up against revealed religion, that by thus declining to make the revelations of God the motives to sway and act them, they cut off all title to any reward in another world even for those things wherein they do well.

The disesteem that men of this strain have conceived against revealed religion, is not for the most part from any settled resolution they have made, or judgment that they have formed, upon a comparison of it with true and genuine reason; but having been baptized into christianity, and unhappily afterwards having imbibed but a superficial knowledge of it from their childhood, and having not been blessed with an early sense of piety; when they grow up, they naturally run into those immoralities which the fire and vigour of youth prompts them to: This makes them catch at every opinion that gives the greatest latitude, and decry the revelation which requires such an elevated degree of virtue and goodness; they begin to think it not calculated for flesh and blood, and think they live according to the law of nature, when they do the greatest violence to it; By that time they come into age, they

they are hardened sinners; and at last, according to the temper of their minds, they go out of the world either in open prophaneness, or expire in a fullen silence and stupidity. That which shews how preposterously these men act, and what a monstrous contradiction they are to themselves is, that though they think, and live, and practice, and speak against revealed religion, yet living or dying they would startle at the thought or mention of renouncing their christianity; though at the same time it is evident they retain the name of it, for no other purpose but to render them the more inexcusable, and their damnation the greater.

There is nothing a man can less answer to God and his own conscience, than the living thus unresolved without laying some certain foundation for his hopes in another world; though the Gospel did not contain the true religion, yet this will be no excuse for a man's not fixing to something: A man who will not be at the pains to come to a firm resolution with himself, and form a judgment of what seems best, so as to act upon some principles, and be firm and constant to them, will have nothing to plead; but if a man use his understanding to the best purpose he can, and should at last determine wrong, he hath invincible ignorance to excuse him to his God, and to his own mind; and hath this satisfaction, that he did the best he could for himself.

Now,



SERM.

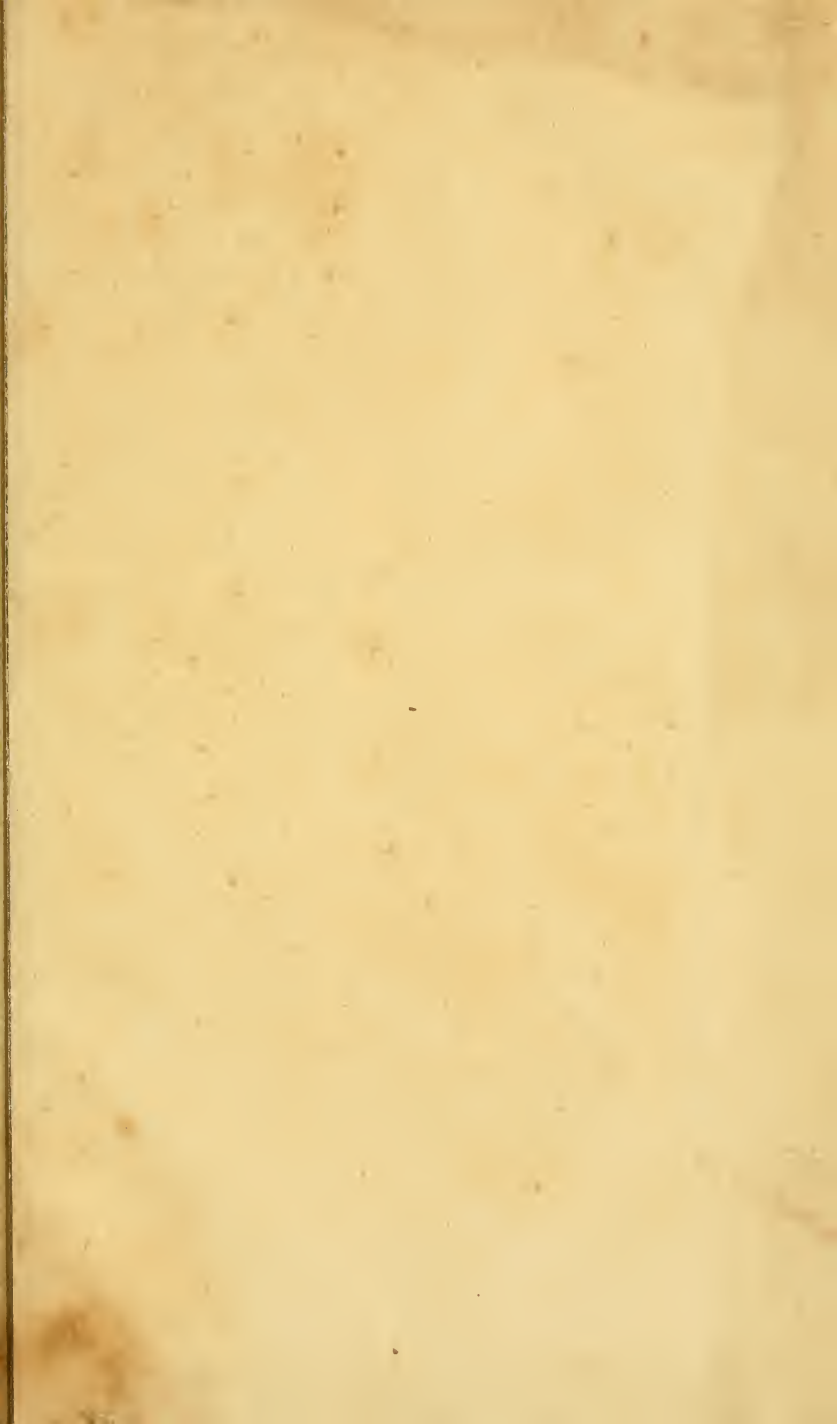
XVI.

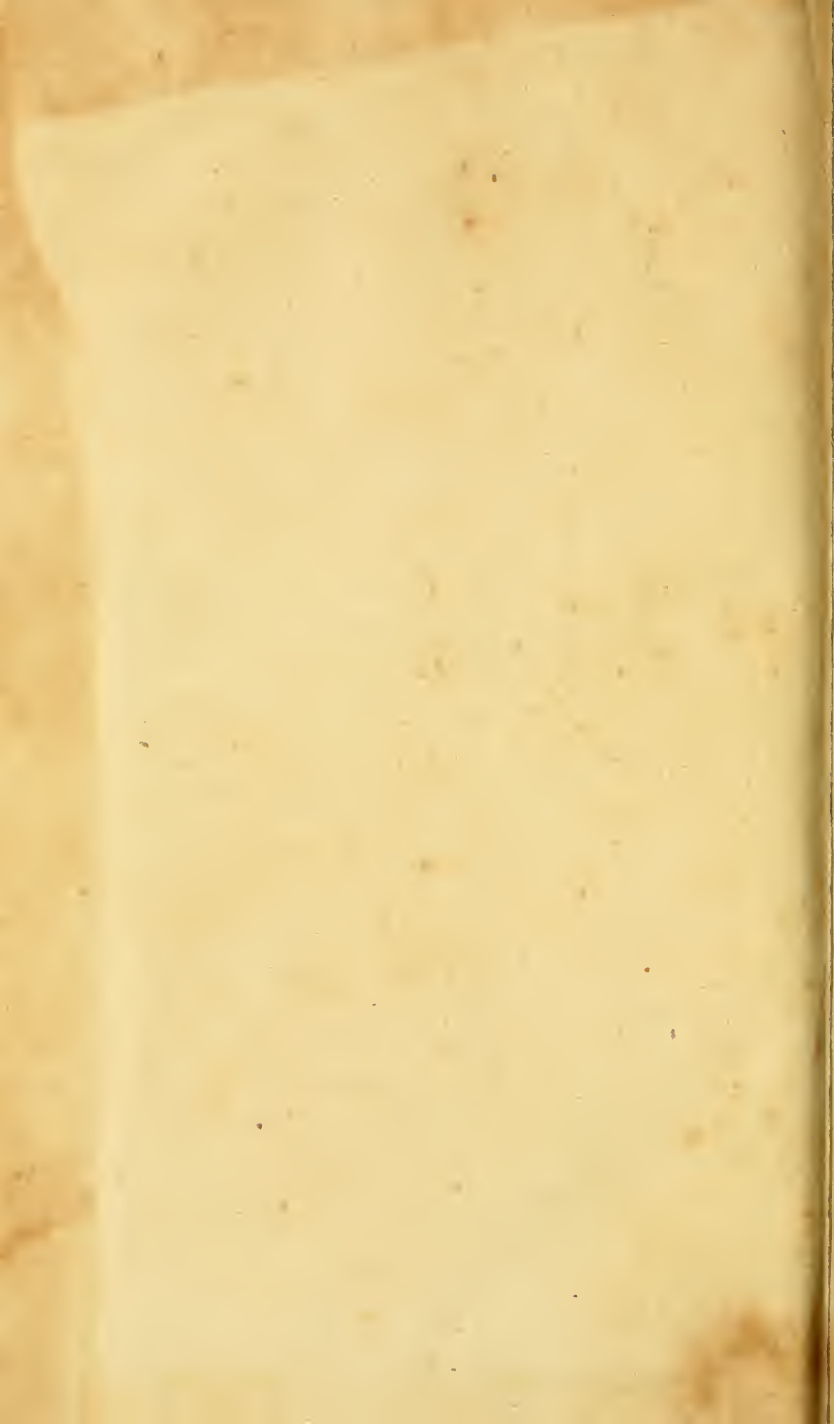
Now, as Christ observes, the surest foundation a man can lay to build his hopes upon, is not that which appears fairest to the eye, and may seem most plausible; but that which is likeliest to hold out against floods and storms, this is the true test of all opinions and principles in religion, and upon serious weighing revelation in the ballance with what men call natural religion, they will find that the Gospel only affords solid grounds for hope and comfort in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. It is upon this trial our Saviour puts his doctrine, in the close of his sermon on the mount, Matth. vii. 24. *Who-so-ever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them; I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, 25. and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.* The Gospel is the only foundation that will remain sure and unmoved in the last extremity; this alone, upon serious consideration, will be found a firm support and comfort in the greatest danger and exigence, and will give such a constancy to the mind as no force in nature is able to shake. Here the soul of man can rest in the greatest severity of affliction and pain; under the agonies of death, and terrors of a general judgment. *But every one that heareth these sayings of mine, says our Saviour, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the*

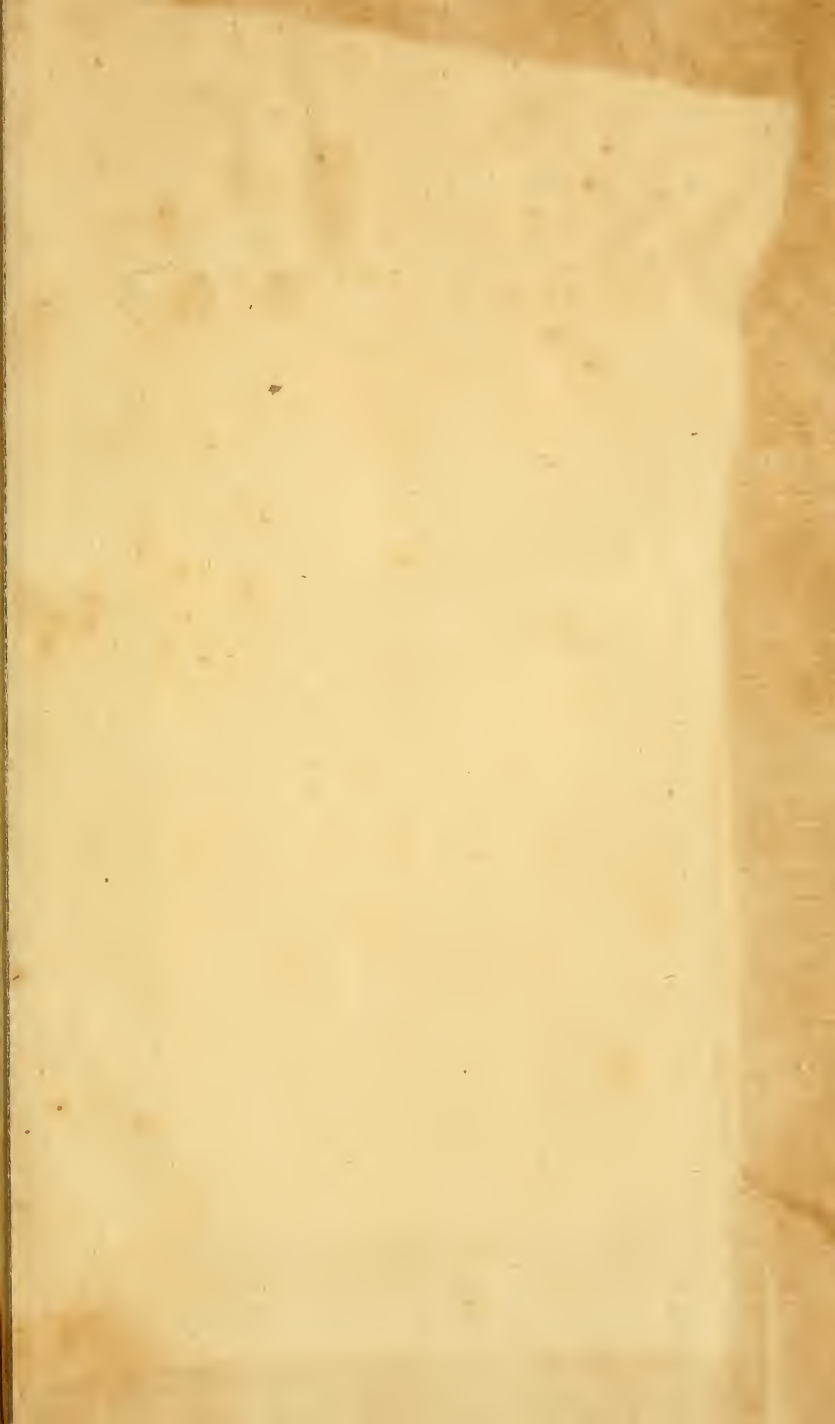
*the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.* Great indeed! it is a fall for eternity; as low as the bottomless pit: and never, never to rise again. It is the ruin of soul and body, the everlasting loss of a man's self, which is a thought more dreadful and amazing, than if all nature besides broke in pieces about him: By which our Saviour would instruct us, that it is the greatest and truest wisdom for a man, not to judge of any opinions or principles of religion as they appear with a fair shew to us in the greatest gaiety of our minds, and vigour of our bodies, and which are backed with subtilty and argument; but as they are most likely to bear the test, and stand us in greatest stead at the hour of death. Let men make such a judgment before-hand, as they would do if they were actually under the greatest extremities human nature is subject to. If men would try all the opinions and principles of libertinism by this rule, and put them into the ballance with the Gospel; they would find them all to be light and trifling, they would find that they are building castles in the air, and they would be convinced, that, *unless their righteousness does exceed the righteousness of those who pride themselves in being men of honour and morality, they shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.*














# Date Due

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